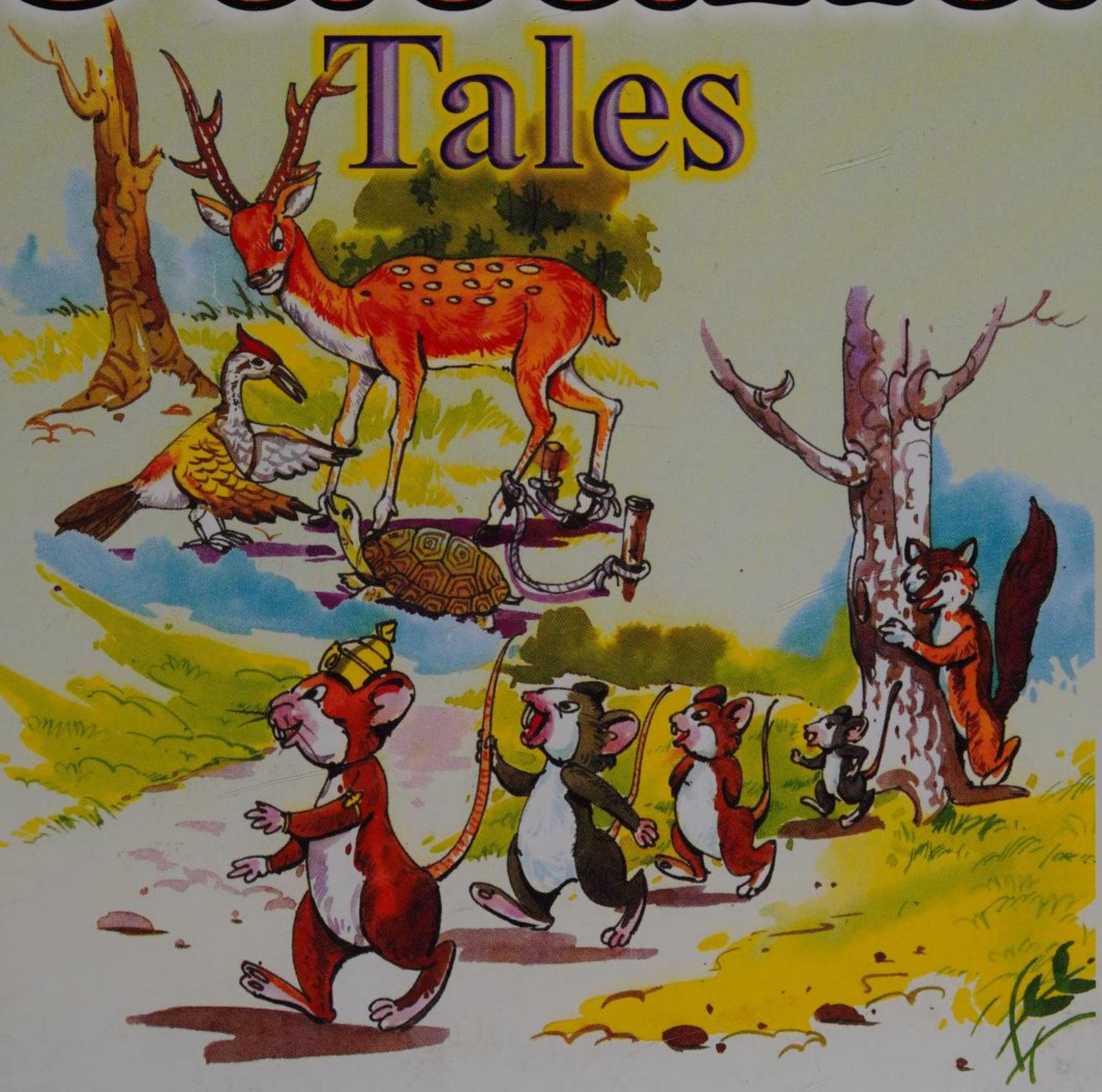
TINY TOT

Best of Jataka Tales



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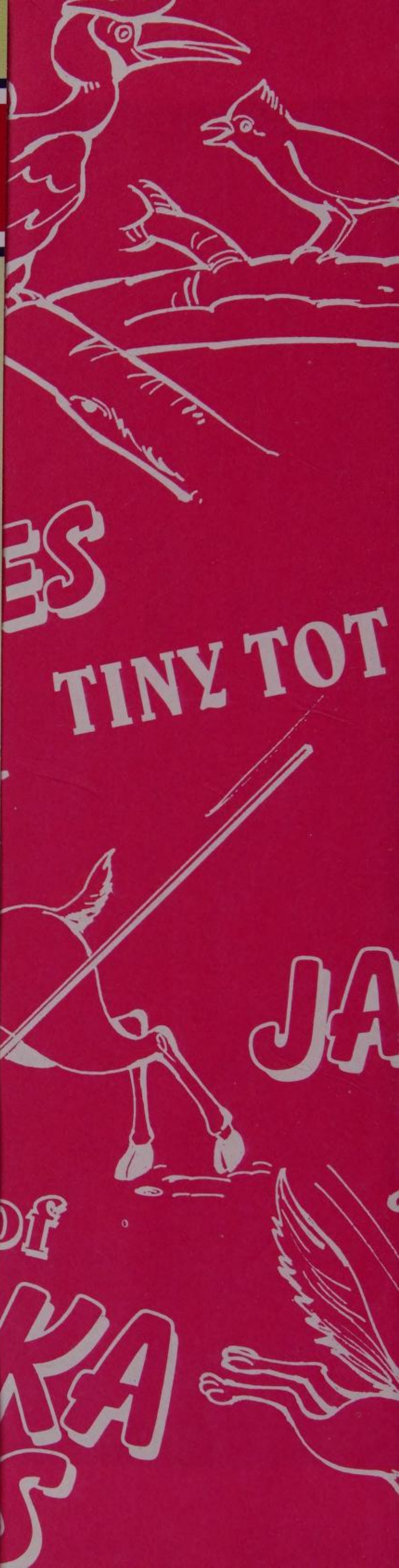
Jataka Tales

'Best of Jataka Tales' are small stories to describe the lives of the Gautam Buddha. The Jataka Tales were written in order to make people learn and understand the messages of Gautama Buddha.

All the stories are written in simple language. There are colourful illustrations in the book to attract the young minds. This book is written to make the children understand the wisdom of right thinking and right living.



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Jataka Tales

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The Value of Friends

A young hawk lived on a tree by the side of a beautiful lake. He was lonely and friendless. Once he saw an attractive female hawk on a nearby tree. He went to her and proposed, "Dear, would you like to spend your life with me ? I want to make you my wife. Then we can have a happy family."

"I will surely marry you but tell me, do you have any friends ?" the female hawk asked.

"No, I have no friends at all," he replied.

"If you want me to be your wife, you must make some friends. Then I'll agree for the ceremony."

So the hawk flew off in search of some friends. First the hawk saw a tortoise. He was basking in the sun. The hawk went to the tortoise and said, "Hello dear tortoise, I want to be your friend."

"Yes, why not ! I would feel myself a lucky being on getting such a friend like you."

Then the hawk thanked the tortoise and flew to a

nearby tree. There he met an osprey (the fishing eagle), who lived on it. The hawk said to the osprey, "Will you be my friend ?"

"Yes, surely. I see no harm in it. I live on this tree most of the time and I don't fly far from the lake. So just call for me anytime you need my help."

The hawk now had two friends. Then he flew to the nearby forest. There he approached the lion's den. He met the lion and said, "Mr. Lion, can you become my friend, please ?"

The lion replied, "Yes, I'll be your friend. Now I am here for your help anytime you want. No one can harm you."

Now having three friends, the hawk felt content. Then he went to the female hawk and said, "I have fulfilled your wish, dear. I have a tortoise, an osprey and a lion as my friends. Now when should I schedule the marriage ceremony ?"

The female hawk blushed and replied, "Anytime you want it, dear."

And so the two

hawks got married. A few months later, the female hawk laid some eggs in their nest. Soon the eggs were hatched and two baby hawks now lived in the nest.

One fine evening two hunters came to the lakeside. They were talking to each other. One of them said, "Oh ! It's been a terrible day. We have not been able to catch any animal at all. It's so late in the evening."

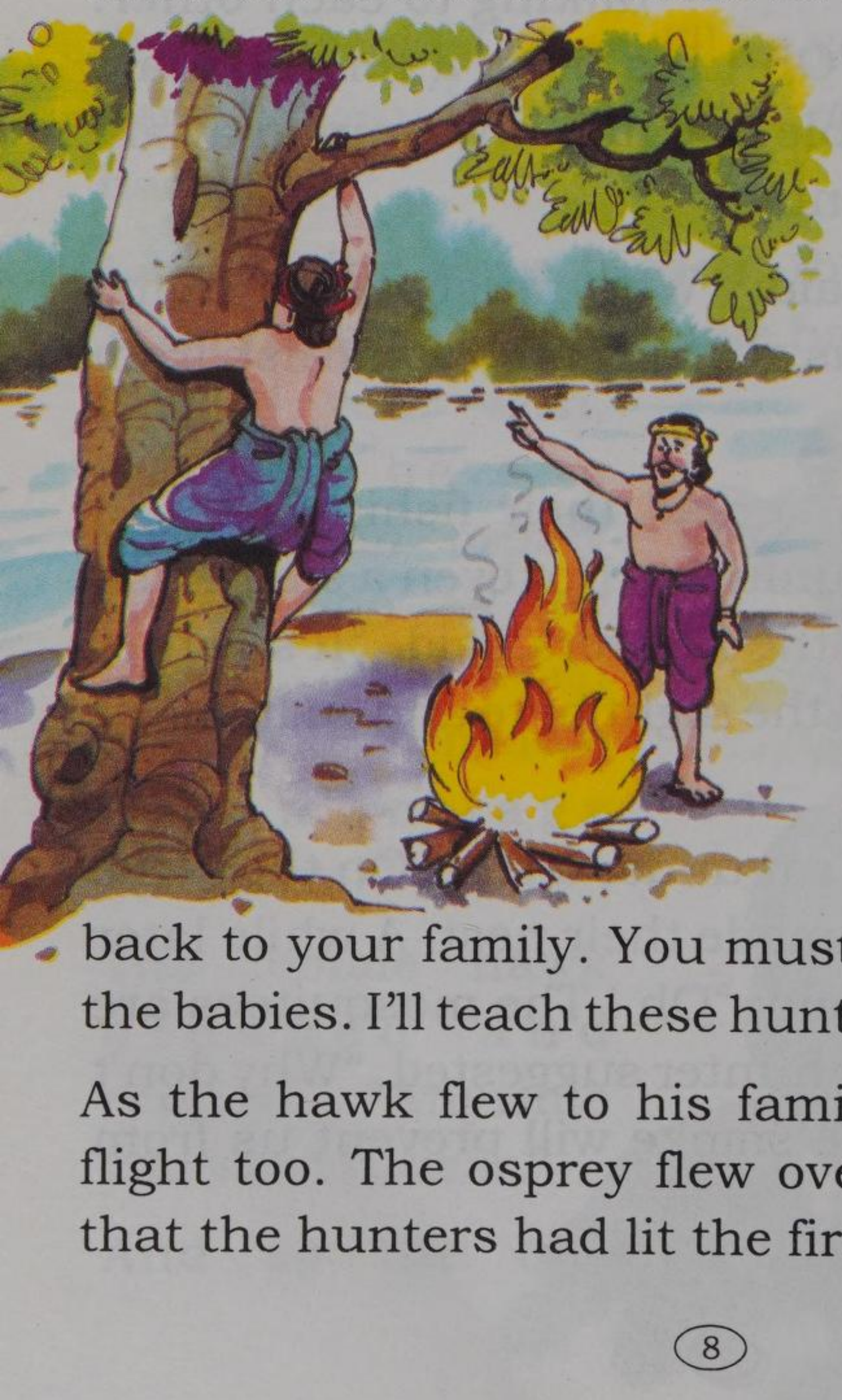
The other hunter said, "Why must we go home empty handed? Let us at least catch some fish from this lake."

So the two hunters spread their fishing nets in water but they were unlucky. Not even a single fish was caught. One of the hunters said, "It's rather late now. Let's spend the night here and go home at dawn."

So both the hunters sat under a tree. On the same tree, the hawks had made their nest. A while later one of the hunters said, "Oh ! The mosquitoes are biting me." The other hunter suggested, "Why don't you light a fire ? The smoke will prevent us from mosquito bites."

So they gathered some dried leaves and twigs to light a fire. The flames and heat of the fire disturbed the baby hawks in the nest. They started making a noise. Hearing that, one of the hunters exclaimed, "Did you hear that ? It seems to me that there are some birds on this tree."

"Let's get them," the other hunter suggested. The parent hawks saw and heard what the hunters were upto, so they got worried about the safety of the baby hawks. Then the female hawk sent her husband to ask his friends for help. The hawk flew to the osprey's tree. On seeing the hawk, the osprey enquired, "Dear friend, what brings you here at this time of night ?"



"Friend, I need your help," the hawk said and told the osprey what was happening. The osprey said, "Go back to your family. You must be there to protect the babies. I'll teach these hunters a lesson."

As the hawk flew to his family, the osprey took flight too. The osprey flew over the lake. He saw that the hunters had lit the fire and were about to

go and get the baby hawks. The osprey dived into the lake water. Then he flew over the fire and shook his wet wings. The water from the wing's feathers fell on the fire. The osprey repeated this several times and soon the falling water extinguished the fire with a hissing sound. The hunters wondered what had caused the fire to die out. One of the hunters had already climbed the tree to get the baby hawks. The other hunter called him, "Come down. It's no use getting the birds when the fire is out. Get down here and help me to light the fire again."

So the other hunter came down and soon they had started the fire again. Again the osprey put out the fire. This went on till midnight. The osprey was tired by now. The female hawk grew worried for the osprey. She turned to the hawk and said, "Dear, the osprey must be exhausted by now. Why don't you ask the tortoise to help us ?"

The hawk flew to the tortoise who was resting on the lakeside. He told him about the situation. The

tortoise said, "Friend, don't worry. Go to your nest and I'll be there as soon as I can."

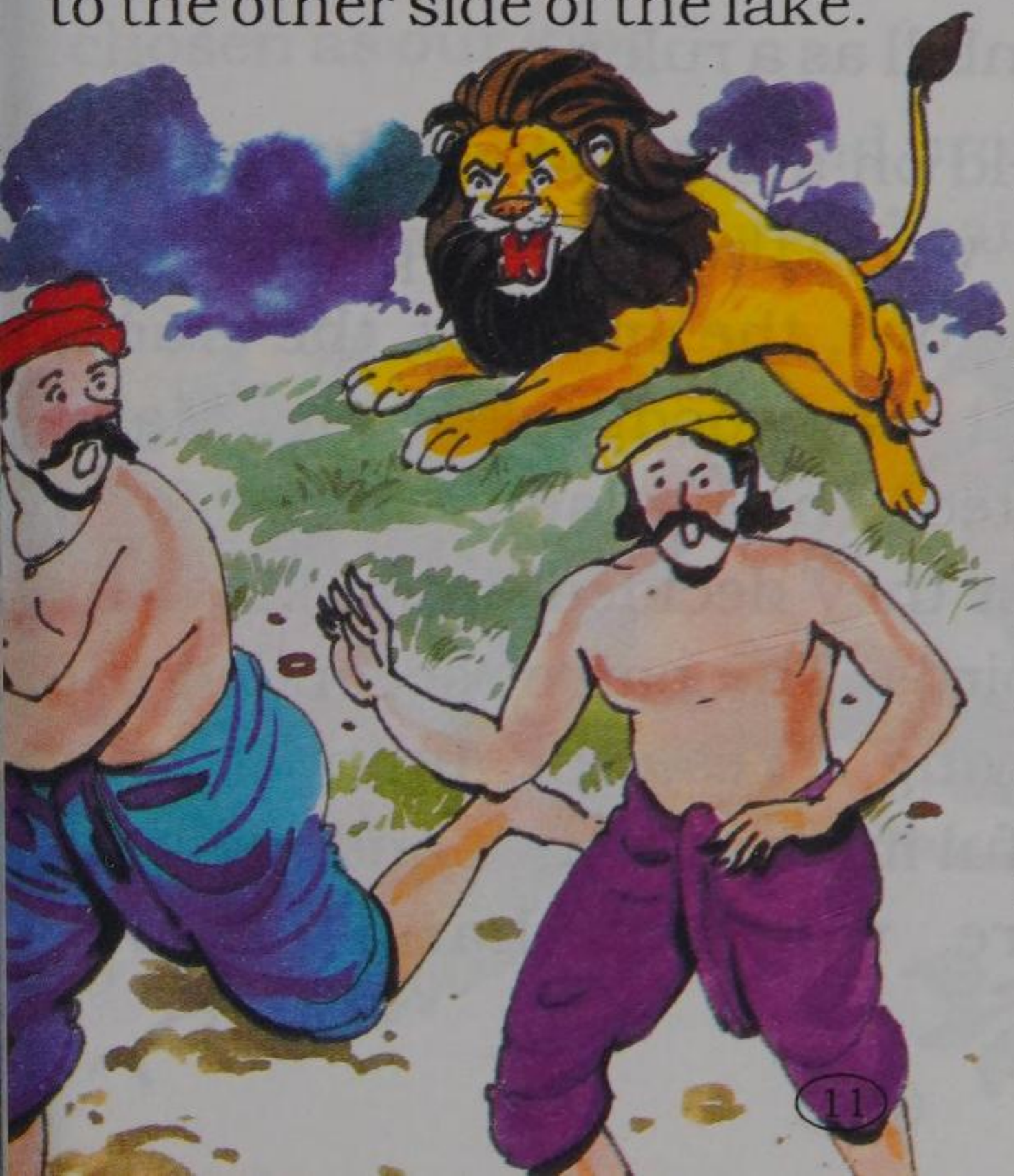
Soon the tortoise crawled speedily and reached where the hunters were lighting the fire. He deliberately crawled near them by the lakeside. Soon enough the hunters noticed the rather big tortoise. They were delighted. One of them said, "Hey ! Look at that big tortoise. Why must we catch those small tiny birds ? Let's get that big catch. We'll have food for the next few days."

So both the hunters planned to catch the tortoise. They tore their shirts into two lengthwise. Then they tied the strips of shirts to the tortoise's stout legs. They tied the other end of the cloth strips round their waist. Then they tried to pull the tortoise together to where they had lit the fire. But the tortoise was very big and strong indeed. Using all his strength, the tortoise crept into the lake water. As the hunters had tied the other end of the cloth strips round their waist, they were easily dragged off by the tortoise. Soon the tortoise had pulled them to the middle of the lake. The hunters somehow managed to untie the strips of cloth round their waists. Then they hurriedly swam

towards the lakeside. On reaching the lakeside they went to the fire and dried themselves. Then one of them said, "I think we must climb up the tree and get the baby birds after all. The tortoise was too smart for us to catch."

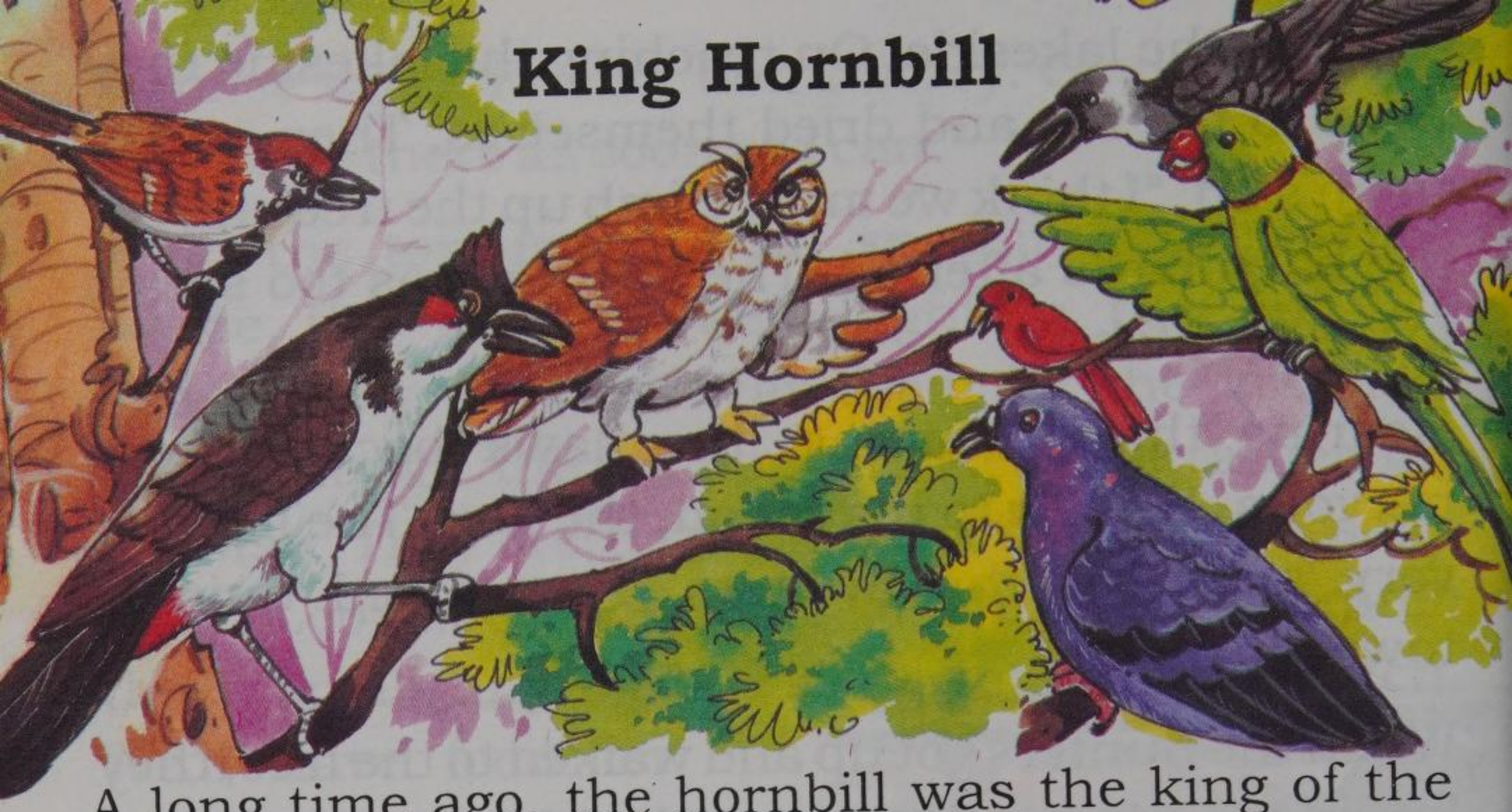
Hearing their planning, the hawk became very nervous. He flew to his friend, the lion. The lion got very angry at the hunters. He walked quickly towards them.

When the hunters got up and walked to the tree, they heard a loud roar. They turned and were horrified to see a large, ferocious lion. He was roaring loudly and approaching them with quick steps. The hunters were very scared. They were not aware that the hawk had called his friend, the lion, to help him out. The scared hunters rushed, gathered their things and jumped into the lake waters. They quickly swam off to the other side of the lake.



The parent hawks were very happy. Now the hawk understood the value of friends. He realized why his wife had asked him to make friends before they had got married.

King Hornbill



A long time ago, the hornbill was the king of the birds. He was not a good king. He was unjust and used to get angry very soon. For even the most minor mistakes, he used to kill the birds in a fit of temper. The birds were very scared of him. They were worried about their future and so they called the meeting of all the birds. There they would decide on a new bird to take the throne. They wanted no cruel hornbill as a ruler.

The meeting was held on a big and shady banyan tree. All the birds were there, the parrot, the pigeon, the crow, the owl, the sparrow, the crane, the stork, the bulbul, the woodpecker, etc. Many names were suggested. The birds discussed for a long time and at last they decided on making the bulbul the king of birds. The parrot seconded the proposed name saying, "Yes, the bulbul looks graceful and beautiful in appearance and his kind and gentle nature will not harm anyone

unnecessarily if one does wrong."

The sparrow chirped in, "But who will tell the hornbill that he is no longer our ruler ? Whoever will go to tell him, will surely meet his death. The hornbill will not like this news at all."

At this, the owl said, "I have already thought about this problem. But, for this, I'll need the woodpecker's help."

The woodpecker agreed to help and went with the owl to carry out his plan. Sometime later, the owl went to meet the hornbill. He addressed the hornbill, "Your Majesty, all of us think that you must do something to prove your abilities to us. You will have to break a thick tree branch. If you succeed, everyone will know of your strength and power. If somehow you fail to break the thick tree branch, the bird who will break the branch will be chosen as our king."

The hornbill was sure and proud of the strength he had. He stood proudly and said, "Oh ! That's no big

deal at all. Just take me where the thick branch is. I'll break it in no time."

So the owl and the hornbill flew to the thick branched tree. All the birds were gathered there to watch. Soon the hornbill started striking the branch with his strong bill. He tried for hours and was soon sweating but there was no damage done to the branch at all. He was exhausted by then. The owl pointed to another thick branch of the tree. It was much thicker and stronger than the branch which the hornbill had tried to break. The owl said, "Now, the bulbul must try to break that strong branch."

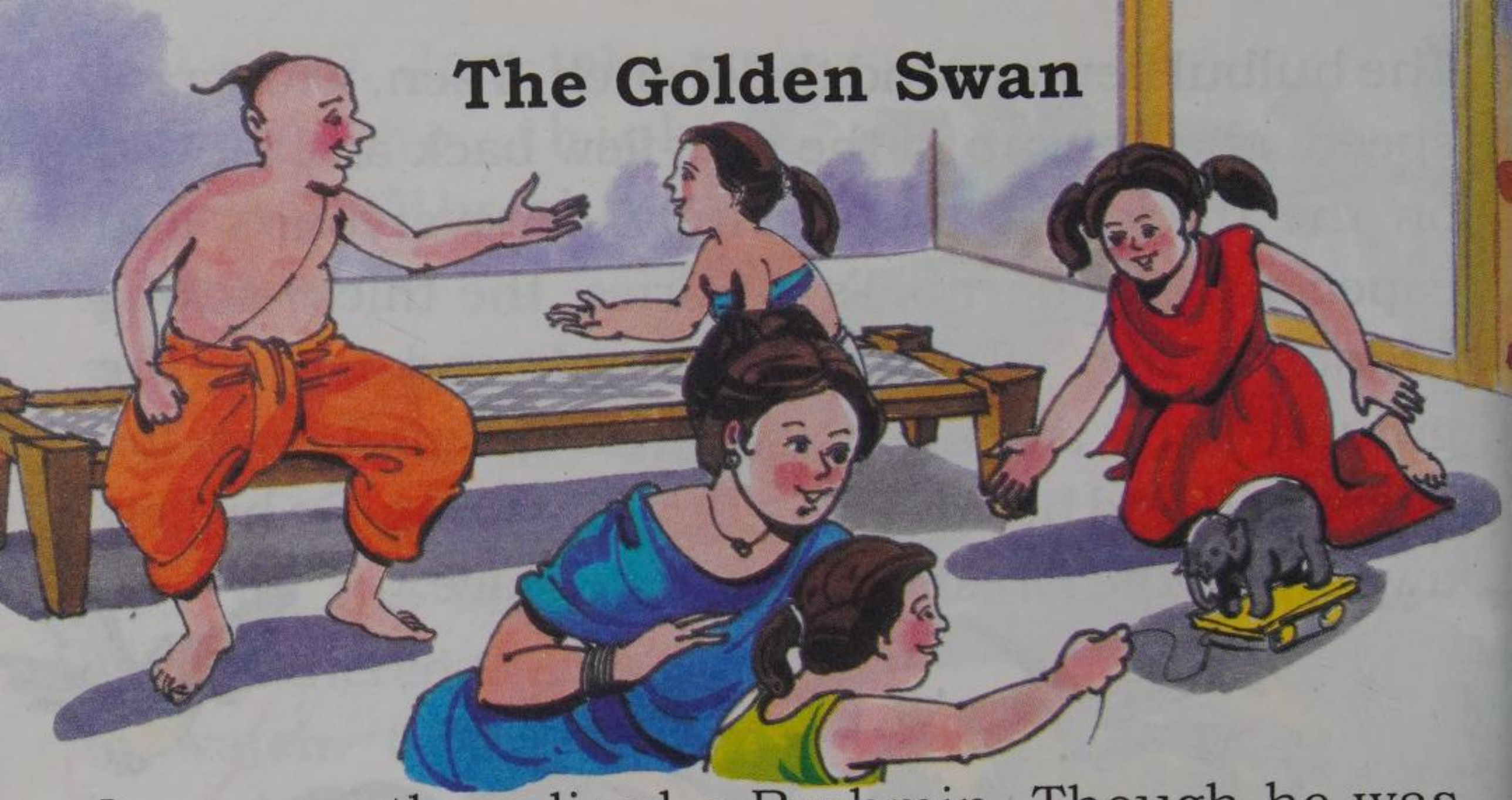
The hornbill said, "That's thick branch indeed. Yes, let the little bulbul try her luck. I am sure the branch won't even receive a scratch."

The bulbul flew around the branch. Then, with great speed, she flew up in the sky, flew back and landed on the thick branch forcefully. To everyone's and especially the hornbill's surprise, the thick, strong branch broke off from the trunk and fell to the ground with a loud crash. The hornbill was too surprised and humiliated to say anything. So he flew away from the forest with a shamed face.

The birds rejoiced and sang praises of their new king, the bulbul. Then they thanked the owl and the woodpecker. Actually, the owl had made the woodpecker peck at the branch for long hours. Just when one more blow was needed to fell the branch, the woodpecker had stopped. The bulbul had landed forcefully on the branch to cause its fall. The hornbill had been fooled to believe that the bulbul's strength had done the trick.

So the birds at last got rid of a cruel ruler.

The Golden Swan



Long ago, there lived a Brahmin. Though he was very poor, yet he led a happy and content life with his family. He had a wife and three lovely daughters whom he used to admire a lot. He took care of all his family's needs.

Once the Brahmin fell very ill. In a few days, he became very weak. Soon he breathed his last. The Brahmin's wife and daughters were crying loudly at the loss of his life. The Brahmin's wife wailed loudly, "Swami, now that you are gone, how will we live our lives ? Who will take care of us ? How will I feed my young daughters ?"

Hearing her wails, the neighbours came to the Brahmin's house. They reassured her, "Please, be calm now. What has happened cannot be changed. But we promise, you'll not need to worry for food and clothes. We will help you in whichever way we can."

So from that day the Brahmin's widow would go door to door to her neighbours daily to get some food for her

family. The kind neighbours always gave her some food. Some of them gave her clothes whenever needed.

Meanwhile the Brahmin had now taken birth as a golden swan. He lived in a beautiful blue lake. The swan thought, "I must try to find out how my family is living after my death."

So the golden swan flew to that village. There he saw his wife begging for food at a neighbour's doorstep. The swan felt very sad. He flew to the roof top of their old hut. His wife had come home after collecting the food. One of her daughters saw the swan and said, "Look mother, a golden swan ! It has got golden feathers. Let us catch it."

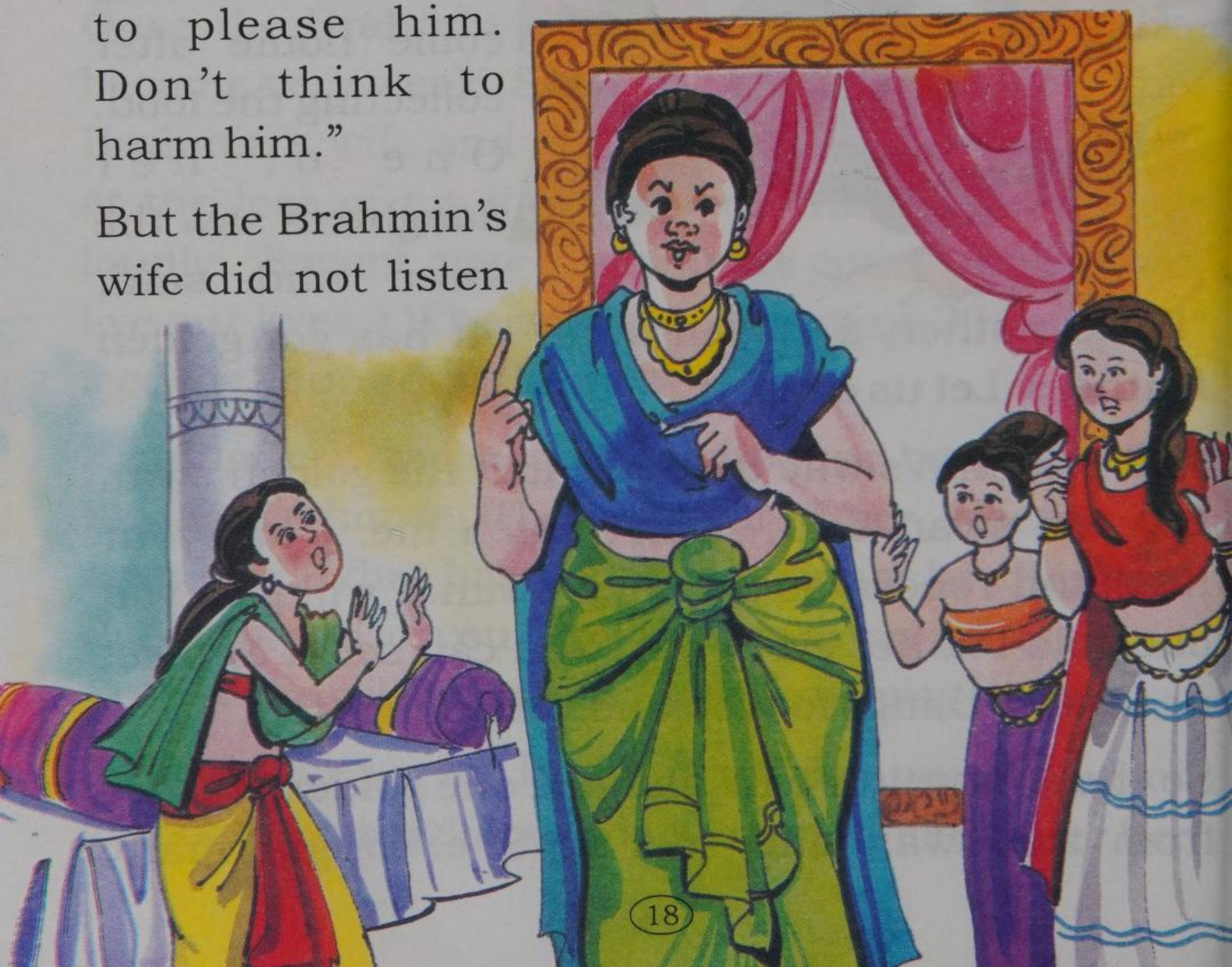
The Brahmin's wife tried to catch the golden swan but the swan said, "Don't catch me. I am your husband reborn as a golden swan. I will give you one gold feather every day. You can sell it and get necessary things for you and your daughters."

So the Brahmin's wife plucked one golden feather from the swan and sold it. She bought many

eatables and clothes with the money she got. From that day the swan gave a gold feather to his wife everyday and soon she became very rich. She now had a big house, good food, many silk clothes, jewels and ornaments and servants to take care of the daughters. One day the Brahmin's wife said to her elder daughter, "Dear, what will happen if this golden swan stops coming to us daily ? He is a free bird. He may leave us and go away anytime he may wish to. Next time the golden swan visits us, I'll catch him. Then I'll pluck off all its golden feathers. We will have all the golden feathers at once."

"No, mother, you cannot do this. Please think about the help he has provided us. Be kind and try to please him. Don't think to harm him."

But the Brahmin's wife did not listen



to her daughter. She was blinded by greed and she was firm on her decision. So on that evening when the golden swan flew into her garden, the greedy woman caught the swan by his throat and started plucking off the golden feathers.

"Hey ! What is this ? Listen to me, you'll suffer....." the swan protested. But the greedy woman did not stop to hear the swan's words. Soon she had plucked off all the feathers from the swan's body.

Gathering the feathers in her arms, the Brahmin's wife danced with glee, "Oh ! I'll be so rich now. I won't need any swan to depend upon."

As she reached to kiss the feathers with pleasure she let out a shriek, "Oh ! What is this ? These are white swan's feathers. They are not golden feathers at all !"

The featherless swan lay on the ground. He said, "You plucked off all my feathers. You did not listen to my words. I wanted to tell you that if you plucked all my feathers they'll turn into ordinary white

swan's feathers. Now you'll have to suffer."

In anger, the Brahmin's wife picked the featherless swan and threw him into a large dustbin. She said, "You useless bird ! You deserve to be thrown in the dustbin. You just stay there."

The swan felt very sad and angry at being treated in such a way. He stayed in the dustbin for a few days for he had no feathers to take flight. After some days, the feathers grew again but they were all white. The swan thought, "I cannot stay here with such thankless people. I must fly away from here."

So the swan took flight never to come back to the Brahmin's family again. The greedy woman had soon spent the wealth she possessed. She was back in the poor conditions as before. Now there was no golden swan to rescue her from the situation.

The Highway Bird

One day the king of birds flew to the Himalayas in search of food. Some other birds also accompanied him. He and the other birds soon found a tree to live on. Next morning, he called all the birds and said, "You must go and look around for food. Go in all the directions. Come and share the information with the others."

Hearing the order of their king, all the birds flew in various directions in search of food. One of the birds flew a little further and sat on a tree. The tree was by a roadside. It was actually a highway. There she saw many bullockcarts carrying loads of foodgrains packed in sacks. She noticed that lots of foodgrains were falling on the road during the passage and the bullock cart driver was not aware of it. So a lot of foodgrains lay on the road. When the

little bird saw the foodgrains, she was delighted. She thought, "I must go and tell the king about this. But if the other birds come to know about this, I'll not get enough of my share. I should better go and tell about this food source to the king before anyone else reaches this place."

So with a plan in mind the bird flew back to the tree. When the little bird reached the tree, the other birds had already returned before her, but no one had found any food. The little bird bowed to the king of birds and said,"Your Majesty, I flew around and reached the highway. Many horsemen, elephants and big sack laden bullockcarts passes by on the road."

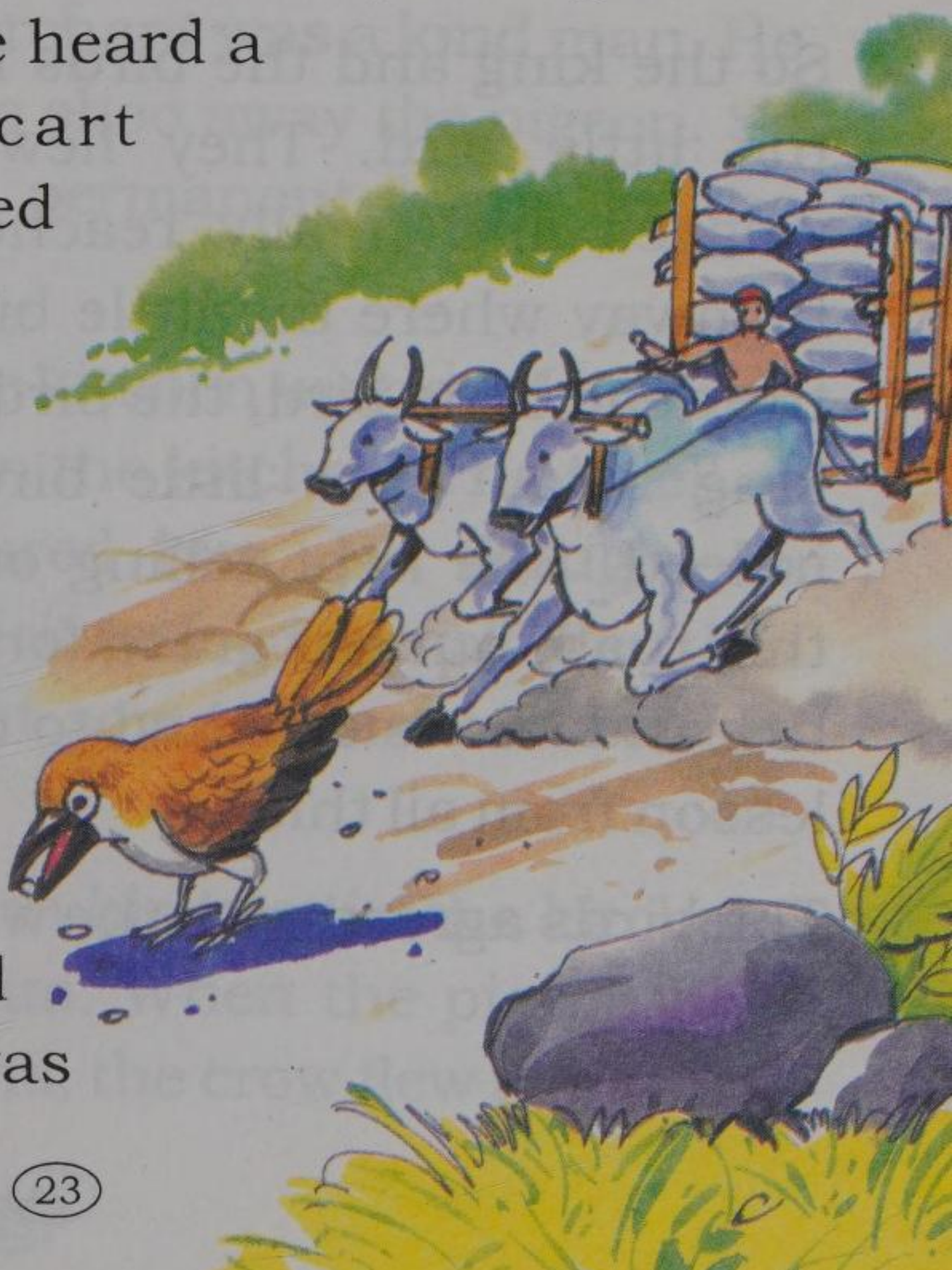
Another bird chirped in, "Did you say 'bullockcarts with big sacks ?' They must surely contain a lot of food-grains."

"Yes, they do," said the little bird. "But once you get down on the road to peck at the grain, flying back is almost impossible. There's

a lot of danger involved. The chariots or carts may crush us any time. It's better not to go there."

The king agreed to the little bird's sensible words. He warned the other birds not to go to the highway. The little bird thought to herself, "How clever of me ! Now all the foodgrains on the highway is for me to eat."

For some days, the little bird enjoyed the feast of foodgrains. One day as she was pecking at the grains on the road, she heard a sound of bullockcart approaching. She looked up and saw a bullock-cart at a distance. She thought to herself, "Let me eat some more grains. The cart is still far away."



But the foolish bird had not judged the bullockcart's speed correctly. As she was

busy pecking the foodgrains, the bullockcart came near and soon the poor little bird was crushed under its wheel. The lifeless bird lay on the road.

It was growing dark and the king of birds got worried about the little bird. He said, "The little bird has not returned yet. Let us go and look for her."

So the king and the birds flew around looking for the little bird. They flew through forests and villages and finally reached a road. It was the highway where the little bird lay dead. On seeing the dead little bird, the birds flew down to her. The king said, "Poor little bird has met a sad end indeed. She kept telling others of the danger on this road, but her greed for the foodgrains got over her and she is crushed to death. We must learn a lesson from all this."

The birds agreed with the words of their king.

The Greedy Crow

A merchant in Varanasi had a big kitchen. A large window was always kept open to let fresh air in. An empty vegetable basket used to hang by a nail. A pigeon made his nest in the vegetable basket. The merchant was a kind man. He instructed his cook not to shoo away the pigeon. So the pigeon now had a permanent home in the merchant's kitchen.

One day a crow flew by the kitchen window. He smelt tasty food being cooked in the kitchen. The smell of fried fish especially allured him. He thought to himself, "Hmm...mm, delicious food is cooked in this kitchen! I must make out some plan to enter this kitchen."

The crow saw the pigeon in his nest in the kitchen. He decided to befriend him. When the pigeon flew out in search for foodgrains, the crow flew along and

said, "Dear Pigeon, will you become my friend ? I'll accompany you daily when you go in search of food."

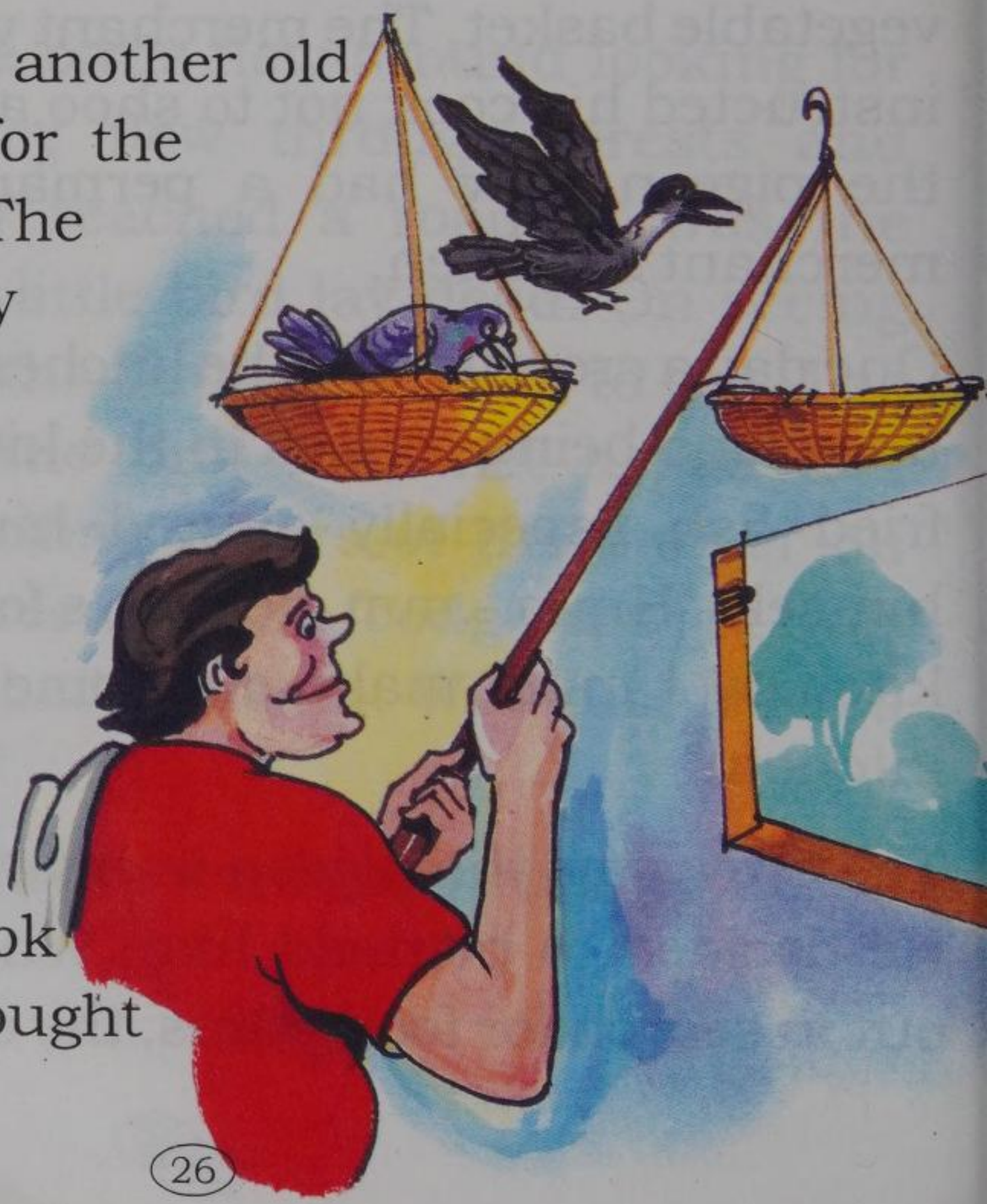
"Why will you come with me ? I eat grains which I get from the ground while you prefer worms," the pigeon said.

"Yes, you can look for your food and I'll look for mine. I only want company when searching for food," the crow said.

The pigeon agreed as he did not see any harm in it. So every day the crow would fly with the pigeon looking for food. Gradually, they became good friends.

One day the crow flew into the merchant's kitchen with the pigeon. The cook saw the crow and said, "Oh ! The pigeon has brought a friend with him. I must make arrangements for the crow to live here in the kitchen."

So the cook hung another old vegetable basket for the crow to live in. The crow was very happy to get exactly what he wished for. After a few days, one evening the merchant came into the kitchen. He called the cook and said, "I have bought



some fresh fish. Keep them properly. They must be prepared for lunch tomorrow. Some guests will be coming home. Make sure that you make fried fish curry and rice with some kheer."

The cook took the fish and kept them covered in a dish and put it in a cool corner. Next morning, the pigeon woke up the crow and said, "Get up, friend. Let's go out to look for food."

"Oh ! no," the crow groaned. "I cannot go out with you. I have a stomach ache. I think the worms I ate last evening were not good. I'll stay back and rest for the day."

The pigeon understood what the crow was upto. He said, "I know what is causing the stomach ache. It's just a silly excuse. You want to stay back here to eat the fish the cook will prepare for lunch."

"No, no !" the crow protested. "I am really feeling very ill. You go on to get your food. I'll feel much better after I rest for the day."

The pigeon flew away. Then the crow flew around the

kitchen in glee. He could not wait for the fish to be fried. Just the thought of it made his mouth water.

After a while, the cook entered the kitchen. He washed his hands and took out the fish from the dish. He cut and cleaned the fish. Then he put salt on it. All this time the crow was watching each move of the cook. Then the cook made preparations for the curry. After heating some oil, the cook fried the fish in it. Then he put spices on the fried fish. The cook felt tired. He thought, "It's still ten o' clock in the morning. The guests will be here after noon. I must rest for a while for I am feeling tired. I'll go to my room and come back after an hour."

The cook took a plate and covered the dish of fried fish with it. Then he left the kitchen.

The crow had been impatiently waiting for the cook to leave the kitchen. He wanted to get this much awaited chance of tasting the tasty fish. So he flew down to the dish to get at the fish. But his flapping wings struck the plate off the dish. The plate struck the floor with a loud bang. The noise was heard by the cook who was just merely out of the kitchen. The

cook rushed in to the kitchen. By then the crow had got hold of a fried piece of the fish. Seeing the fish in the crow's beak, the cook became furious. He ran and caught the crow by the neck and said, "You greedy crow, I was kind enough to let you stay in the kitchen with your friend. Is this how you repay my kindness ?"

Then the cook plucked out all the crow's feathers off his wings and said, "I'll take your wings, dip it in sour curd and spices and fry them."

So the cook did what he said and threw the crow in the basket. He said, "This is the punishment for your greedy nature."

Then the cook left the kitchen.

A while later the pigeon flew into the kitchen. He saw the wingless and featherless crow and realized what must have happened. The pigeon said, "Friend, I hope now you have learnt your lesson well."

The Faithful Prime Minister

A long time ago, the King of Crows lived in Varanasi. He loved his wife, the Queen of Crows very much. Everyday the royal couple used to go together in search of food.

One day as the King and Queen of crows flew over the King of Varanasi's palace, the Queen of Crows saw something through the open window of the kitchen. The royal cook was setting a plate for the King's lunch. There were curries, fish, rice, vegetables, sweets, fruits and dry fruits with some sharbat. The next day the King of Crows said to his wife, "Dear Queen, let us go to look for food. It's getting late."

At this the Queen of Crows turned her face away and said, " I don't want to come with you to look for some dirty worms in the soil. I want to eat what the King of Varanasi was being served yesterday. The

fish and the rice were specially looking delectable."

The King of Crows tried to persuade his wife to eat what they could afford but the Queen of Crows was stubborn. The King of Crows got worried. The Prime Minister of Crows came to the King of Crows and said, "Your Majesty, why are you looking so worried ? Why have you not gone in search of food ?"

The King of Crows told the Prime Minister about what was worrying him. The faithful Prime Minister said, "Stay here with the queen, Your Majesty. I'll go and get the food which our queen desires."

The Prime Minister of Crows gathered eight crows with him and flew to the palace. They landed on the rooftop. The Prime Minister instructed the other crows, "Keep an eye on the courtyard. The cook has to cross the courtyard from the kitchen to the King's private chamber. He will be carrying the plate for the King's lunch. I'll do something to cause the cook to spill the food. Four of you must

fill the rice in your beaks. The other four can pick the fish or meat pieces in their beaks. All of you must then fly to give the food to our queen."

A while later the royal cook passed across the courtyard with a large covered plate. The Prime Minister of Crows flew towards him and struck the plate off his hands. As soon as the food spilled on the ground, the four crows picked the rice in their beaks and the other four crows also flew off with some meat and fish in their beaks. All the eight crows escaped safely.

The King of Varanasi saw what was happening. He called out to the cook and said, " Get that crow before he flies off !" The cook ran and caught the Prime Minister of Crows before he could take flight. The cook took the crow to the king of Varanasi. The King said, "How could you dare to steal from the King's plate ?"

"Your majesty, I was merely serving my master,

the King of Crows. He had asked me to get the royal food for the Queen of Crows as she had wished for it."

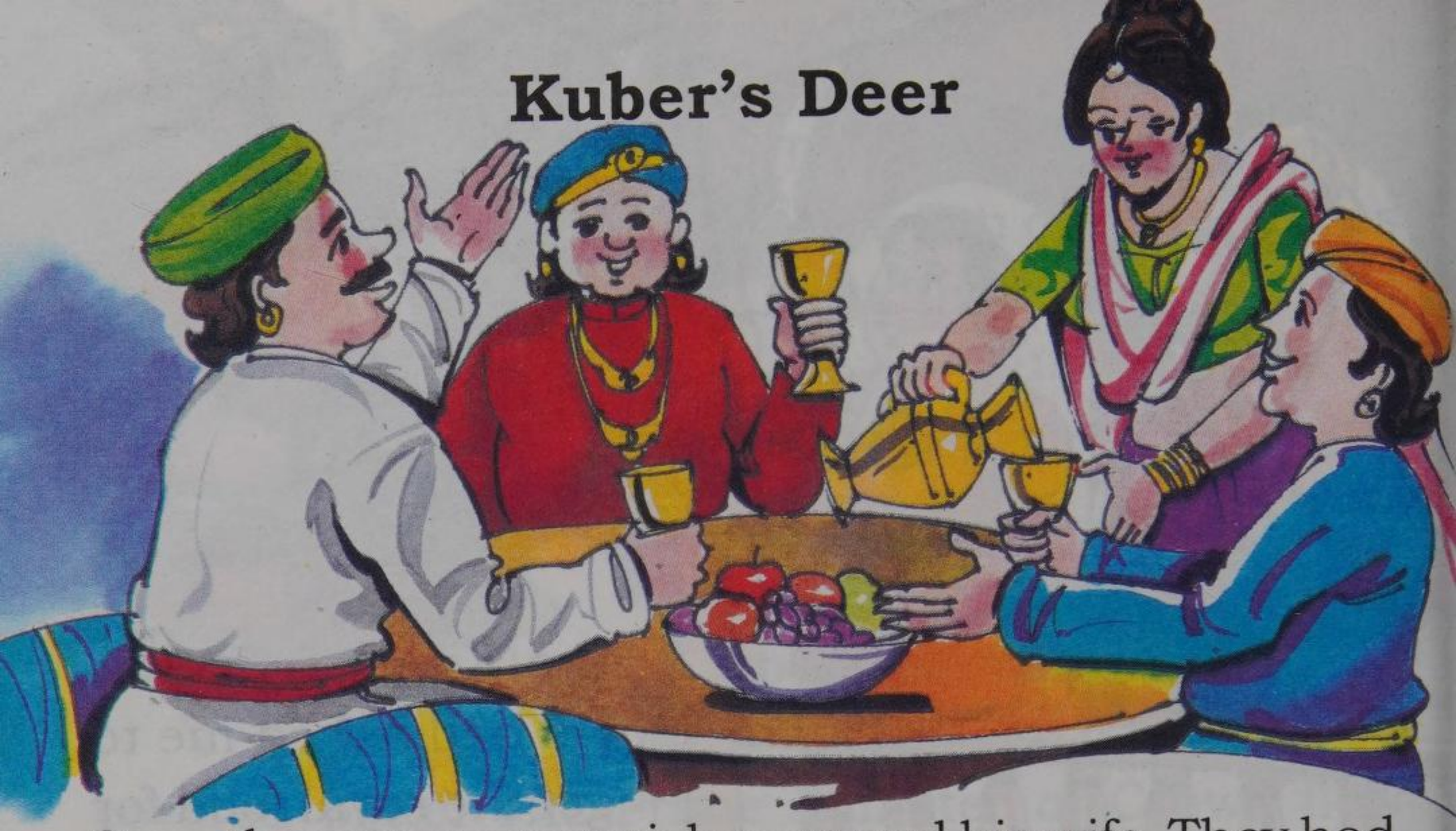
Hearing this the King of Varanasi enquired, "You are now caught by us. Aren't you afraid of being punished ?"

"No, Your Majesty" the Prime Minister of the Crows said. "I have done my duty faithfully and now I can die with no worries at all."

The reply impressed the king. He said, "Your faithfulness has been commendable. As a reward, I am going to free you and from today onwards a royal plate will be sent to your king, the queen and for yourself. The other crows will be given plain boiled rice everyday."

With this reassurance and gift, the Prime Minister of Crows flew off to his king and the queen.

Kuber's Deer



Once there was a very rich man and his wife. They had only one son. They had named him Kuber. As he was the only son, Kuber was loved and cared very much. All his wishes were fulfilled. Even when he grew up, he had plenty of money to spend in merry-making. He was always surrounded by people. He thought that they were his friends but in fact, they were merely with him to enjoy the luxuries of Kuber. One day Kuber's parents passed away. Now Kuber was left with all the wealth and he spent it lavishly on friends, food and luxurious living. When the wealth started to reduce, Kuber went to money-lenders. He needed the money to spend on entertaining his friends. Soon he was in great debt. He was not given anymore money by the money-lenders so the friends deserted him. The only visitors to Kuber's house were the money-lenders. When Kuber could not give them their money, he felt very sad and ashamed. He made a plan. He sent a message to his money-lenders which read, "Please

come to my house tomorrow morning. I have something important to tell you."

Next morning all the money-lenders reached Kuber's doorstep. Kuber said to them, "Kind Sirs, will you please follow me ?" Kuber led the wondering money-lenders to a high cliff. Then before anyone could understand what was happening, Kuber jumped off the cliff. He fell into the river flowing down there with a loud splash. The money-lenders felt sad and helpless. They waited for some time to see if Kuber would somehow swim out safely but there was no sign of him. They all thought sadly that Kuber was now dead and gone. They all went back home.

A golden deer was taking rest under a shady tree by the river bank. He was watching all the events but could do nothing in the presence of money-lenders. When they went back home, he quickly rushed to the river and jumped in. He pulled unconscious Kuber out. After a few minutes he became conscious and was surprised to see that he was still alive. Kuber looked at the golden deer and said, "Thank

you very much my friend. I am very obliged for you saved my life."

When the golden deer asked about him. Kuber told the story of his life to the deer. Then the deer said, "You have now got a chance to lead a new life. Go to the neighbouring kingdom and lead a life with a new identity. But you must not tell anyone that I, the golden deer, live near this river."

Kuber promised the deer and left for the neighbouring kingdom. There he worked as an officer in the king's palace.

One day the queen of the kingdom dreamt of a beautiful golden deer. So enchanted was she by the deer's beauty that she wished to possess it. She expressed her wish to the king. The king made an announcement that, anyone, who can fetch the golden deer for the queen, will be rewarded with a thousand gold coins.

Kuber heard the announcement. Despite of the

promise made to the golden deer, Kuber's heart was filled with greed. He went to the king's court and said, "Your Majesty, I know where the golden deer lives. I can lead you and your men to the exact spot."

Next day the king and his men went with Kuber. They soon reached the river bank where the golden deer lived. They captured the golden deer within an hour. Then every one was surprised when they heard the golden deer speak. The golden deer said, "Your Majesty, I'll tell you the story of Kuber who has led you to me."

So the golden deer told the king all about how he had saved Kuber and about Kuber's promise.

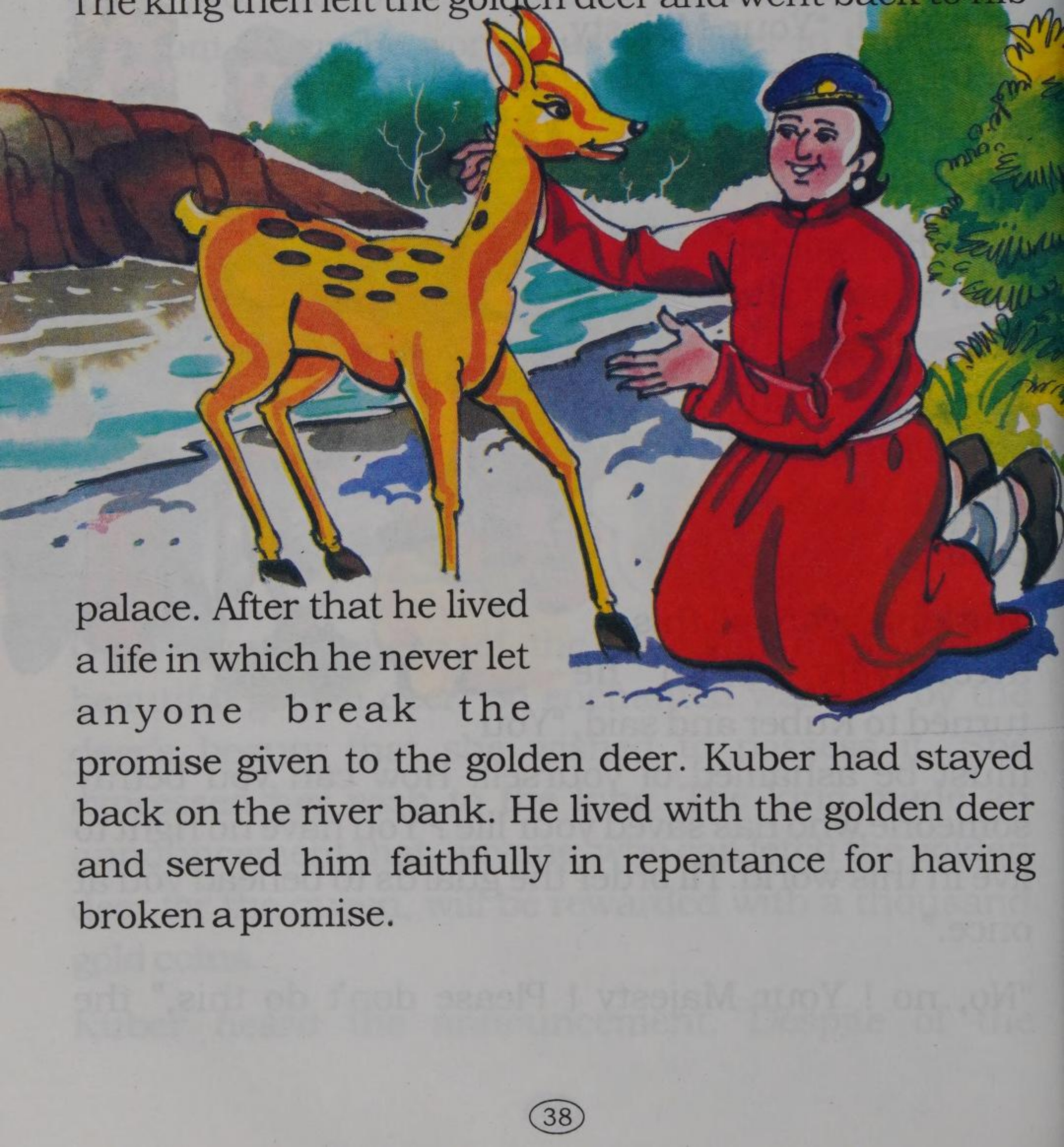
The king heard all this attentively. Then he turned to Kuber and said, "You must be ashamed of yourself. How can you betray someone who has saved your life ? You have no right to live in this world. I'll order the guards to behead you at once."

"No, no ! Your Majesty ! Please don't do this," the

golden deer intervened. "Please, let him go. Forgive him. Spare him and all the animals and birds who are hunted. I want humans and animals to live lovingly in peace. Give me a promise that no one will harm the animals and birds."

The king said, "I appreciate your kindness. I will spare Kuber's life and I promise never to let any harm come to the animals and birds."

The king then left the golden deer and went back to his palace. After that he lived a life in which he never let anyone break the promise given to the golden deer. Kuber had stayed back on the river bank. He lived with the golden deer and served him faithfully in repentance for having broken a promise.



The Monkey-King

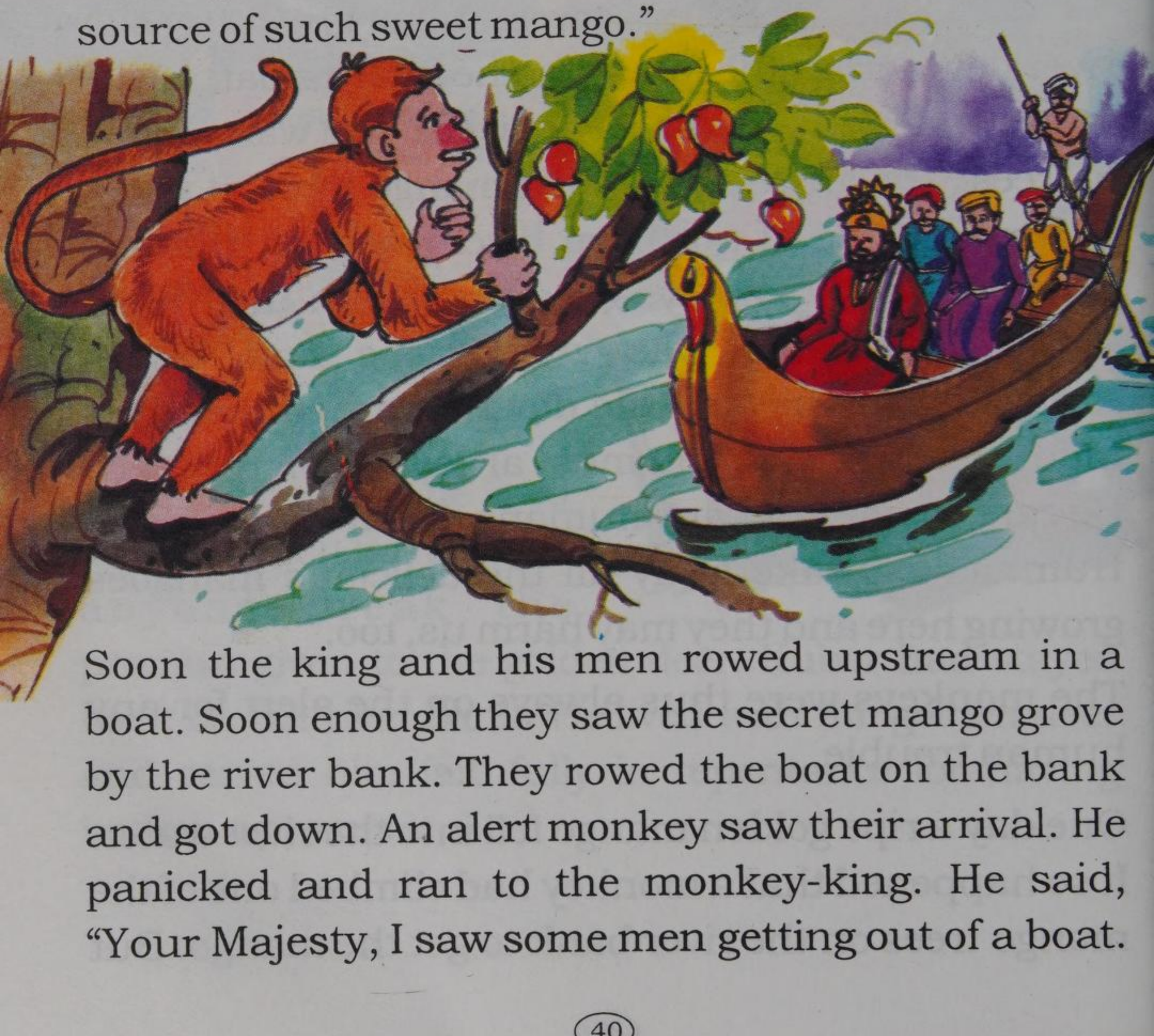
Once there was a large forest full of green trees. A river flew across the forest. In the interior part of the forest and by the bank of the river there was a grove of trees. The grove mostly had mango trees. It was a cool place. It had not been discovered by humans yet. A band of monkeys lived there with their king. The monkey-king was very loving and caring towards his subjects. One day he warned the other monkeys, "Friends, you must always be on the alert. Be careful not to let any humans discover this grove. Humans will take away all the delicious mangoes growing here and they may harm us, too."

The monkeys were thus always on the alert for any human trouble.

One day a ripe golden mango fell into the river water. It so happened that a monkey had climbed one of the mango trees on the river bank to get the mango. But

the mango had fallen into the river. Gradually the water flowing downstream took the mango with it. Some fishermen had spread their net to catch fish. The mango was caught in the net of one of the fishermen. The fisherman saw the golden ripe mango. He took it to the king and said, "Your Majesty, I caught this ripe mango in my net. Its golden colour made me bring it here as a gift for you."

The king tasted the mango. He became very surprised on its sweetness. He said to the fisherman, "If you have found it in the river, it must have come floating downstream. Let's go upstream and find the source of such sweet mango."



Soon the king and his men rowed upstream in a boat. Soon enough they saw the secret mango grove by the river bank. They rowed the boat on the bank and got down. An alert monkey saw their arrival. He panicked and ran to the monkey-king. He said, "Your Majesty, I saw some men getting out of a boat.

Perhaps they have discovered our secret mango grove."

"That's bad news, indeed. We must do something to save our lives."

With these words, the monkey-king looked around. He saw a long vine on a tree. He swung by the vine and got across the river on the other bank. Then he swung back to the other monkeys. He said, "You saw how I swung to the other bank. You all must follow my example. Once we are on the other bank, no one can catch us."

So the monkey-king swung to the other bank. He was strong and fatter than the others so he could do this easily. For the shorter and weaker subjects, it was a difficult task. The vine was also falling short for them to swing to the other bank. The monkey-king saw the problem. He swung back to the subjects. He tied the vine around his waist and swung to the other side. There he held on to a large rock. Thus, the vine now served as a bridge between the grove and the other bank. Soon the monkeys walked and swung to the vine and reached across to the other bank. The monkey-king grew tired as the monkeys were

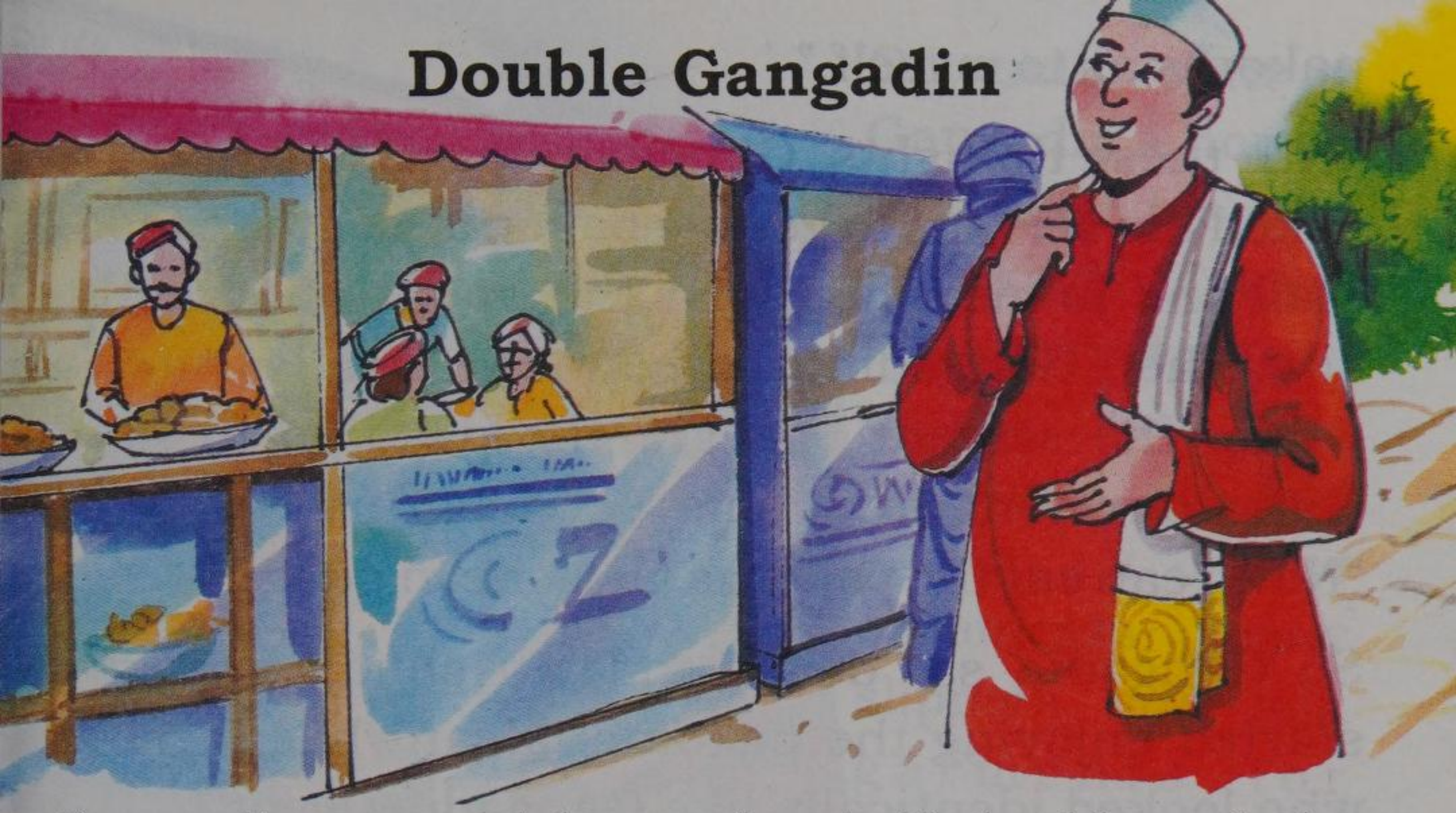
crossing. He was finding it difficult to hold on to the rock any longer. As all of the monkeys had reached the other bank. the monkey-king let go off the rock because of the tiredness. He fell into the river with a loud splash. Seeing this, the king's men jumped in and rescued the monkey-king. They brought him before the king. The king said, " I was watching all you did to protect your subjects. You look tired and you are injured. I think you must come and rest for some days in my palace as a guest."

"No, no ! I am alright. All my tiredness has gone because I am sure all my subjects are safe."

Hearing these words of the monkey-king, the king was impressed by the monkey-king's sense of duty. He said, "I am happy that you know your responsibilities as a king very well. As a reward, I will not harm your subjects or your secret mango grove."

With such words, the king and his men left the secret mango grove forever. The monkey-king and his subjects lived happily in their secret grove for many more years.

Double Gangadin



Gangadin was a rich merchant. He had hoarded a lot of wealth but he had a miserly nature. He did not even spend much on his family. His wife and children did not have enough to eat or decent clothes to wear. He was so miserly that he did not like to spend even a single rupee on himself.

One day as Gangadin was passing by a food-stall, the smell of fried pakoras wafted to his nose. His mouth started watering. He thought, "Oh ! These pakoras smell delicious. It has been so many days since I tasted some. I'll go and get pakoras worth just two rupees. But I can't eat them at the stall because I can see some of my friends there. I'll have to share the pakoras with them."

Suddenly, Gangadin changed his idea. He thought, "Ah, yes ! I'll take the pakoras and eat them at home. But my wife and children will ask for a share. What should I do ? I just want to have the

pakoras all to myself."

With these thoughts, Gangadin reached home. He asked his servant to get the pakoras from the food-stall and to meet him near the woods outside the city. Then Gangadin rushed to the woods. After a while, the servant brought the pakoras to him. Gangadin sent away his servant and thought, "Now I can eat the pakoras all alone in peace."

So Gangadin sat down under a shady tree and started enjoying the pakoras. Meanwhile a man, who looked identically like Gangadin, went to the royal court and said to the king, "Your Majesty, I want to give away all my possessions in charity. I want to ask people to come into my open house and pick whatever they want for themselves. I have come to seek your permission to perform this charity."

The king and all the courtiers were shocked in disbelief. Everyone in the kingdom knew of Gangadin's miserly nature, so they were surprised indeed. The king granted permission to Gangadin.

Then the look alike

Gangadin went to Gangadin's house. He called his wife and said, "Take a thousand gold coins from the cupboard. Go and get some ornaments, costly slippers and silk garments for yourself and the children."

Gangadin's wife did not know what to say when she saw a changed Gangadin. Then she quickly took the gold coins from the cupboard and rushed to the market with her children. She was afraid that her husband would change his decision anytime. Soon the people from the city also came to Gangadin's house. They picked whatever they took their fancy and took them home. A man came with a bullock-cart. He hoarded fine articles of furniture and silver vessels in his cart and left for home.

Real Gangadin was sitting in the woods. After having eaten the pakoras, he got up to go home. As he neared the lane, he saw a man taking his belongings in a bullock-cart. He yelled at him, "Hey, you ! Stop ! You thief. Where are you taking these things ?"

But no one answered him or stopped the man.

Real Gangadin ran home and saw a look-alike giving away alms to the poor at his doorstep. People were taking away things from his house. His wife and children stood dressed in fine garments. Seeing all this, real Gangadin rushed to the royal palace. He went to the king and told him, "Your Majesty, I am the real Gangadin. A look-alike of mine is giving away my wealth. Please help me to gain justice."

Soon Gangadin's look-alike and Gangadin's wife were presented in the royal court. The king asked Gangadin's wife, "Tell me, which of these men is your husband ?"

Gangadin's wife pointed to the look-alike wordlessly. At this, real Gangadin was nearly in tears. He said, "Because this look-alike has given money to my wife, she does not even recognise me. O my look alike, just tell me who are you anyway ?"

At this the look-alike replied, "I am none but your

father. That's why I look just like you. I have come from heaven to help your family. I left so much wealth behind so that my descendants would live a happy and comfortable life. But you turned out to be a miser. You are not feeding my daughter-in-law and my grandchildren well. This is not the way to treat your family. You must stop hoarding the wealth. Spend it to live a good life."

With these words, Gangadin's father disappeared in a whiff of smoke.

Everyone in the royal court was amazed to have witnessed such a sight. Then the king said, "Gangadin, your conduct hurt and troubled your father's soul. He had to come from heaven to teach you a lesson. Now you must obey his wishes and keep your family in comfortable conditions."

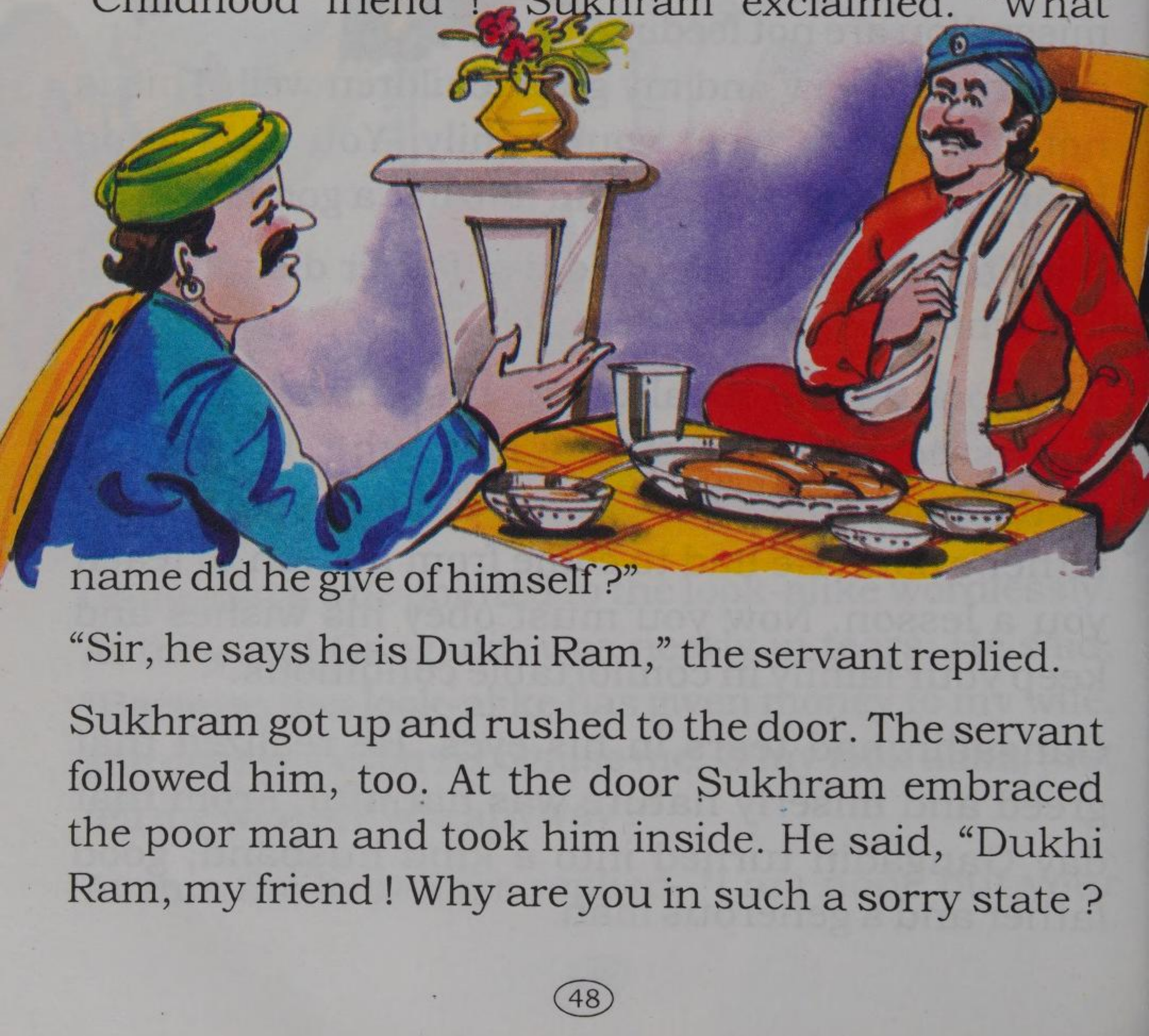
Gangadin had tears in his eyes. He realized that greed and miserly nature was harmful. From that day Gangadin turned into a kind husband, good father and a generous man.

Dukhi Ram's Plan

Sukhram was a wealthy merchant who lived in a big mansion. He had a luxurious life-style, many servants and a large, expanding business. In spite of all this, he was a kind and content man. Neither was he greedy natured nor was he proud of his wealth.

One day as he sat having the breakfast, a servant came to him and said, "Sir, a poor, haggard man is at the doorstep. He is wearing torn clothes and looks hungry and weak. He is insisting to see you. He says that you are his childhood friend."

"Childhood friend !" Sukhram exclaimed. "What

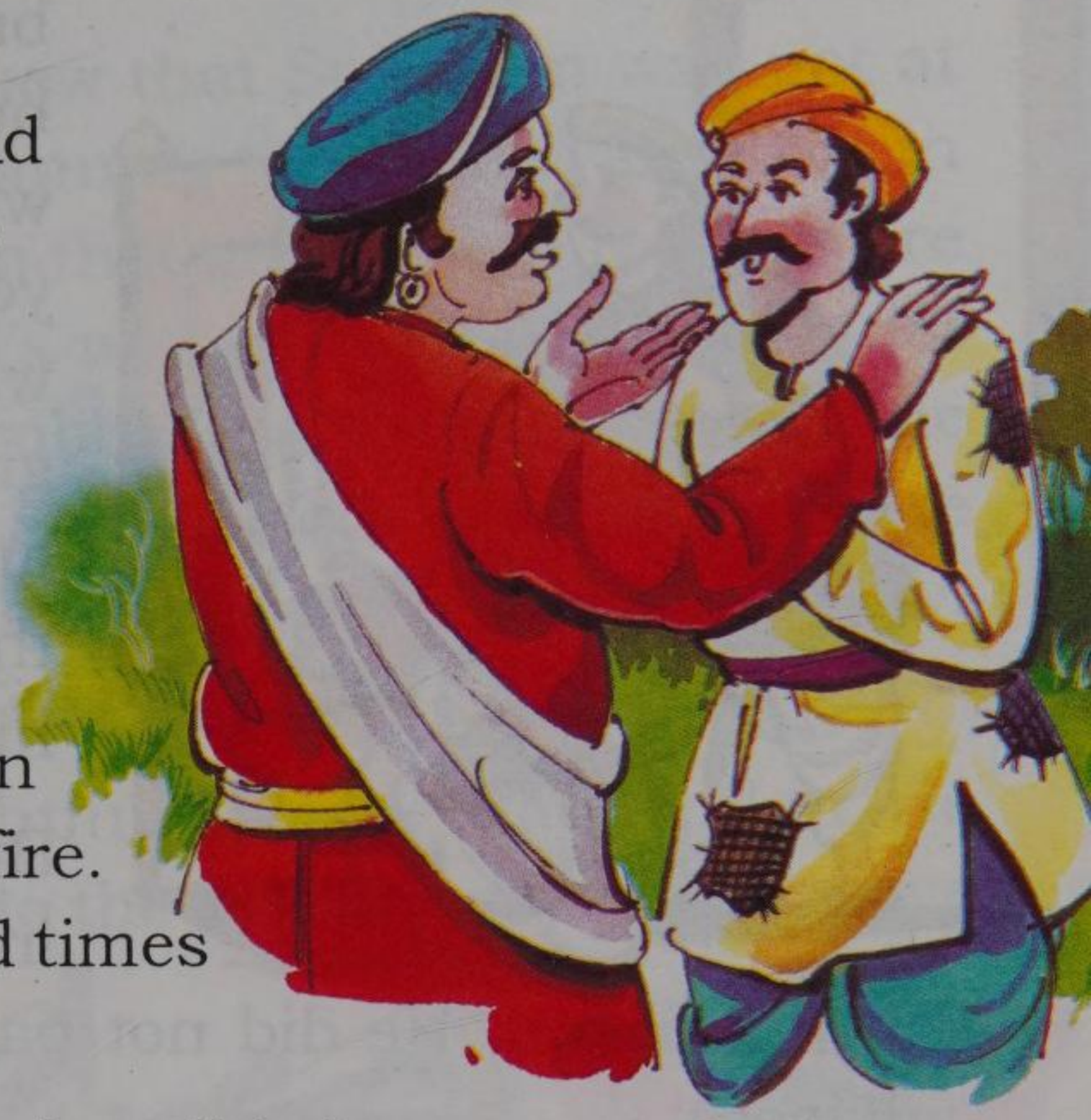


name did he give of himself ?"

"Sir, he says he is Dukhi Ram," the servant replied.

Sukhram got up and rushed to the door. The servant followed him, too. At the door Sukhram embraced the poor man and took him inside. He said, "Dukhi Ram, my friend ! Why are you in such a sorry state ?

You must tell me."



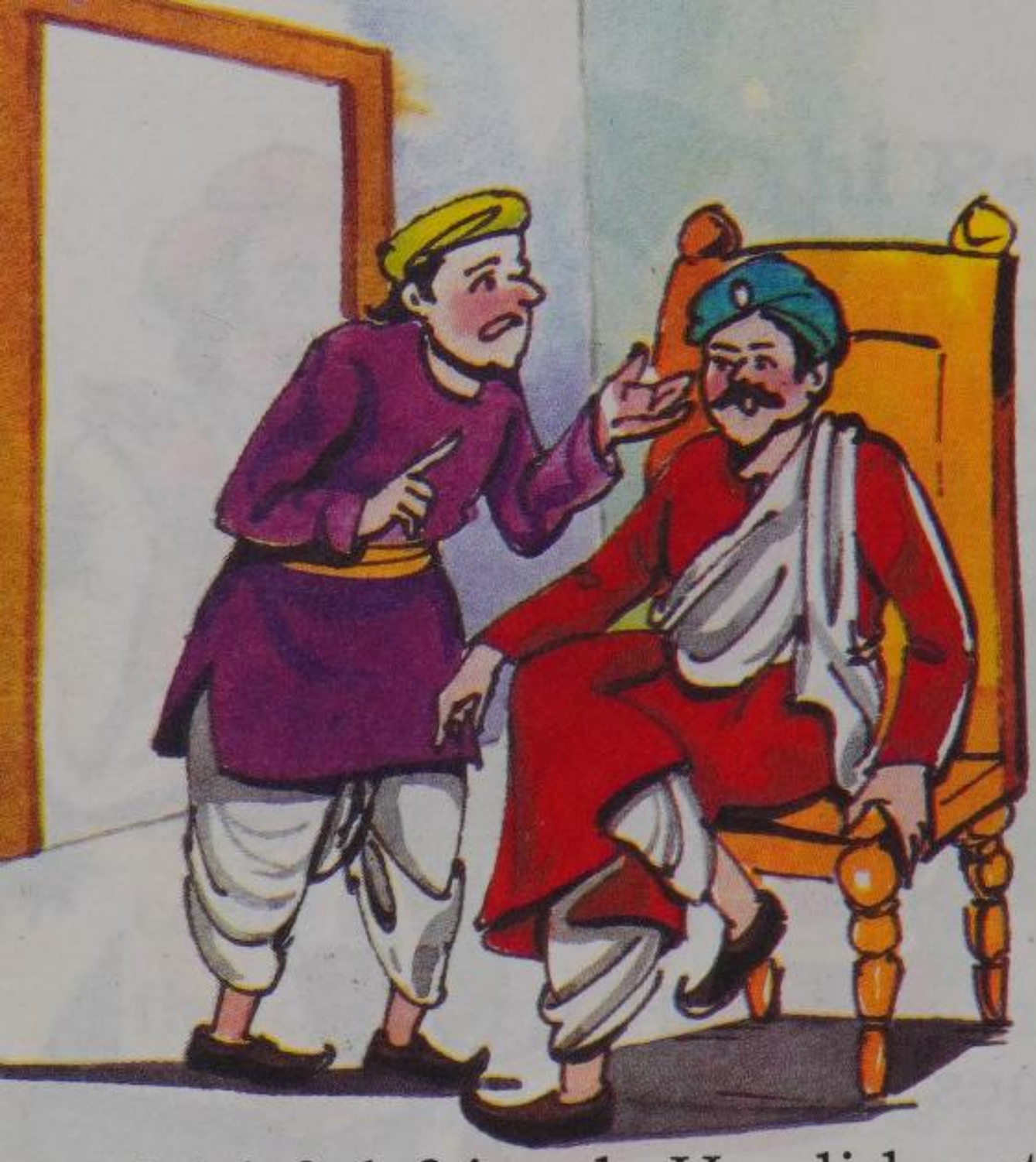
At this Dukhi Ram had tears in his eyes. He said, "I had a small shop in the village. The business was good for some years. Then one day I suffered a loss when my shop caught fire. From that day my bad times had begun."

"But, dear friend, why didn't you contact me earlier?" Sukhram enquired.

"I thought that you would not recognise me because you are a rich man now. I came here only when the situation in the village became unbearable."

Sukhram embraced Dukhi Ram again and said, "Don't worry, my friend. Let bygones be bygones. Now you will be my chief assistant in the business. Go to the guest room, refresh yourself and come for breakfast. We will have breakfast together as we used to do when we were children."

From that day Dukhi Ram worked with Sukhram. Sukhram's other friends wondered how a poor villager had suddenly gained a favoured post in Sukhram's business. Many of them felt jealous. One of them visited Sukhram and said, "Dukhi Ram will



bring ill luck to your business. His bad times will cast a shadow over your good life. If you want your goodness, give him some money and send him back to the village. Don't keep him here."

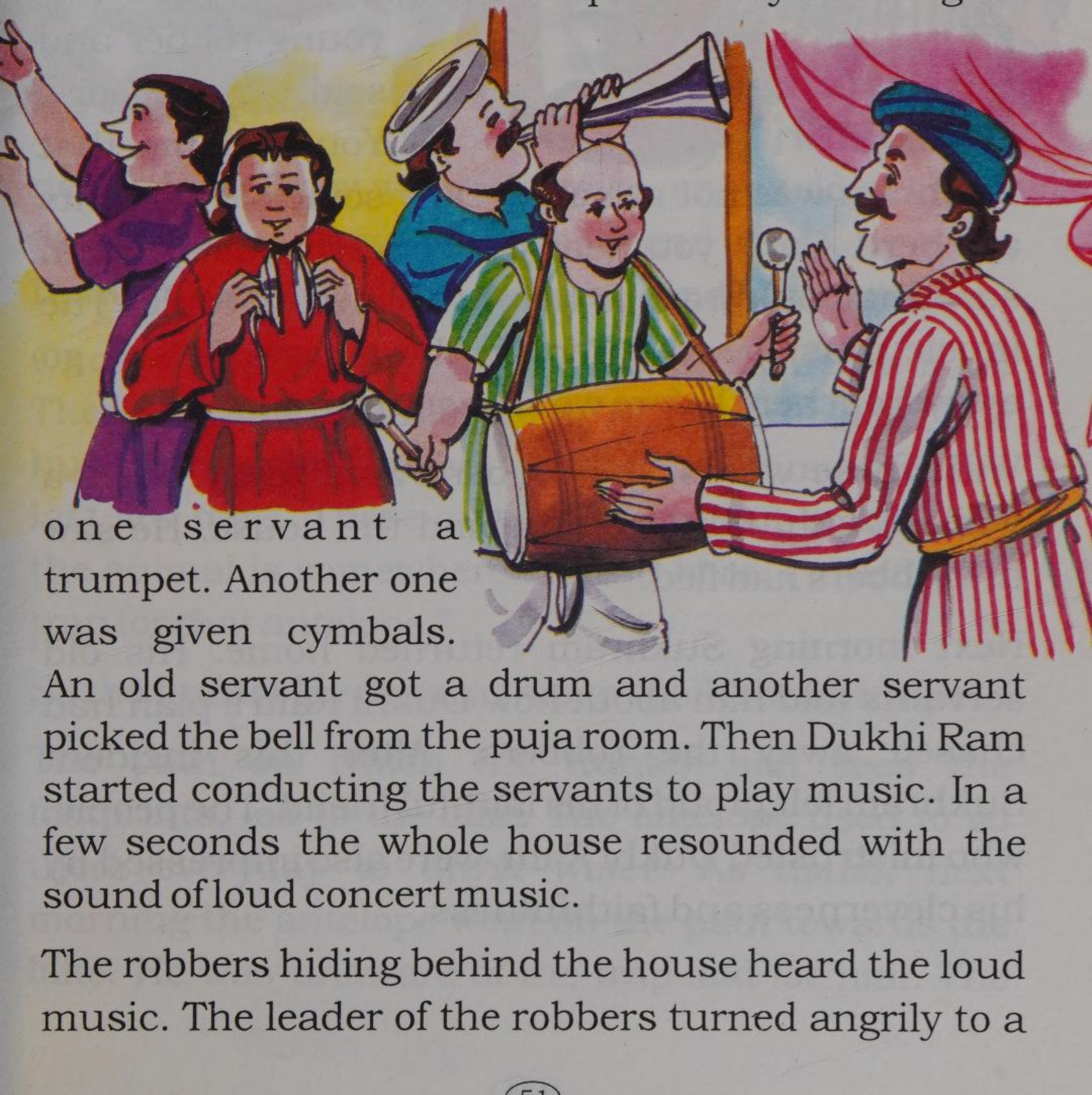
But Sukhram was an intelligent man and a faithful friend. He did not pay any heed to the ill-advisors.

Many days went by and Dukhi Ram worked hard. Soon his hard work paid fruits. Sukhram's business flourished even more. Now Sukhram would often leave the town without worrying about his business. He knew Dukhi Ram would look after it well. But people still did not trust Dukhi Ram.

Once Sukhram went out of town due to some business transaction. Dukhi Ram was now at the helm of the business. One night Dukhi Ram had been sitting by an open window. He heard some people talking. They

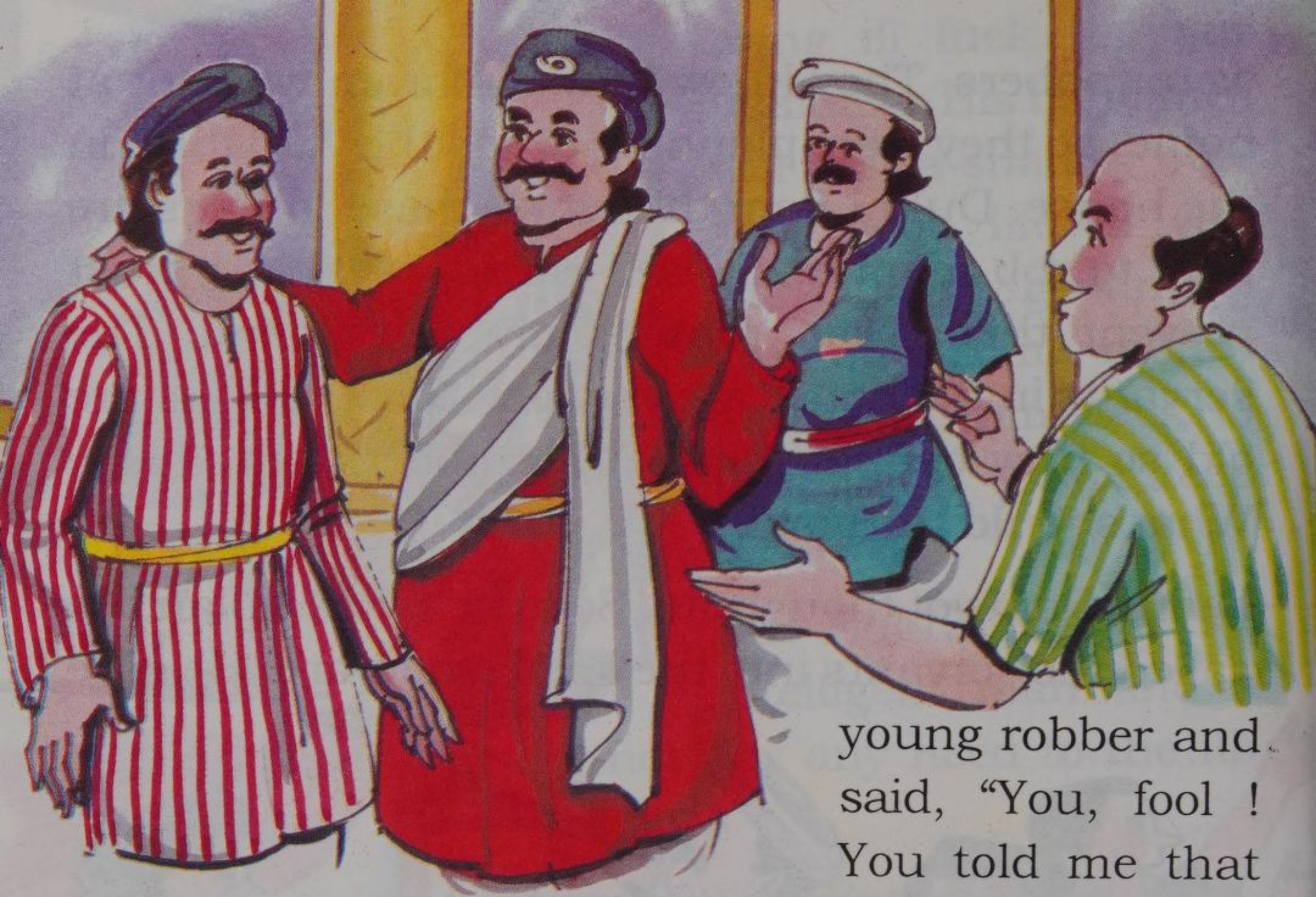
were robbers. They knew that Sukhram was not at home, so they were planning to rob the valuables in the house. Dukhi Ram thought, "These robbers are here to rob my friend's well-earned wealth. I must prevent them from robbing my best friend. The servants in the house are very few. Most of them are old so they cannot handle the robbers physically. What should I do now ?"

Dukhi Ram got thoughtful. Soon he made a plan. He called the servants into the open courtyard. He gave



one servant a trumpet. Another one was given cymbals. An old servant got a drum and another servant picked the bell from the puja room. Then Dukhi Ram started conducting the servants to play music. In a few seconds the whole house resounded with the sound of loud concert music.

The robbers hiding behind the house heard the loud music. The leader of the robbers turned angrily to a



young robber and said, "You, fool ! You told me that Sukhram was not at home. Only some old servants are here. Can't you hear the concert music ? I am sure that Sukhram is here with some people. The music must be to entertain the guests. Let us go away from here before we are caught."

With these words, the robbers went away. After a while, Dukhi Ram went behind the house. He saw the robbers had fled.

Next morning Sukhram returned home. His old servants told him about how Dukhi Ram's plan had chased away the robbers. After this incident Sukhram felt proud of his faithful friend. The people, who mistrusted Dukhi Ram, were also impressed by his cleverness and faithfulness.

True Friends

A long time ago three friends lived near a lake. They were a tortoise, an antelope and a woodpecker. They used to spend their time by hunting for food, playing around, and sharing jokes.

Once a hunter came to the woods near the lake. There he saw the footprints of the antelope. The hunter thought, "I've not caught any animals for the last few days. These antelope footprints mean that the animal is somewhere around here. I must lay a trap for that antelope."

So the hunter lay down a trap to catch the antelope.

The path on which the hunter had seen the footprints, led to the lake. The antelope used to go there everyday to drink water. As usual, next morning the antelope went on the path towards the lake. He was unaware of the trap laid for him. The

poor antelope was soon caught in the trap. He called out in fear, "Oh ! Help me ! Some one, please help me." The tortoise and the woodpecker heard the antelope's loud cries for help. They soon reached the spot. There they saw the antelope in the trap. They got worried to see their friend in such a situation. The two friends started discussing the way to release their trapped friend. After thinking for a few seconds the woodpecker suggested, "Dear tortoise, you have really strong teeth. Why don't you nibble at the trap while I go to keep the hunter distracted ? You must free our friend before he returns."

The tortoise agreed with the woodpecker's suggestion and at once got busy nibbling at the antelope's trap. Meanwhile the woodpecker flew to the place where the hunter was camping. The woodpecker thought to himself, "When the hunter comes out of his tent, I'll peck him so hard on his head that he will go back to the tent. He will be delayed and in the meantime the tortoise will release the

antelope."

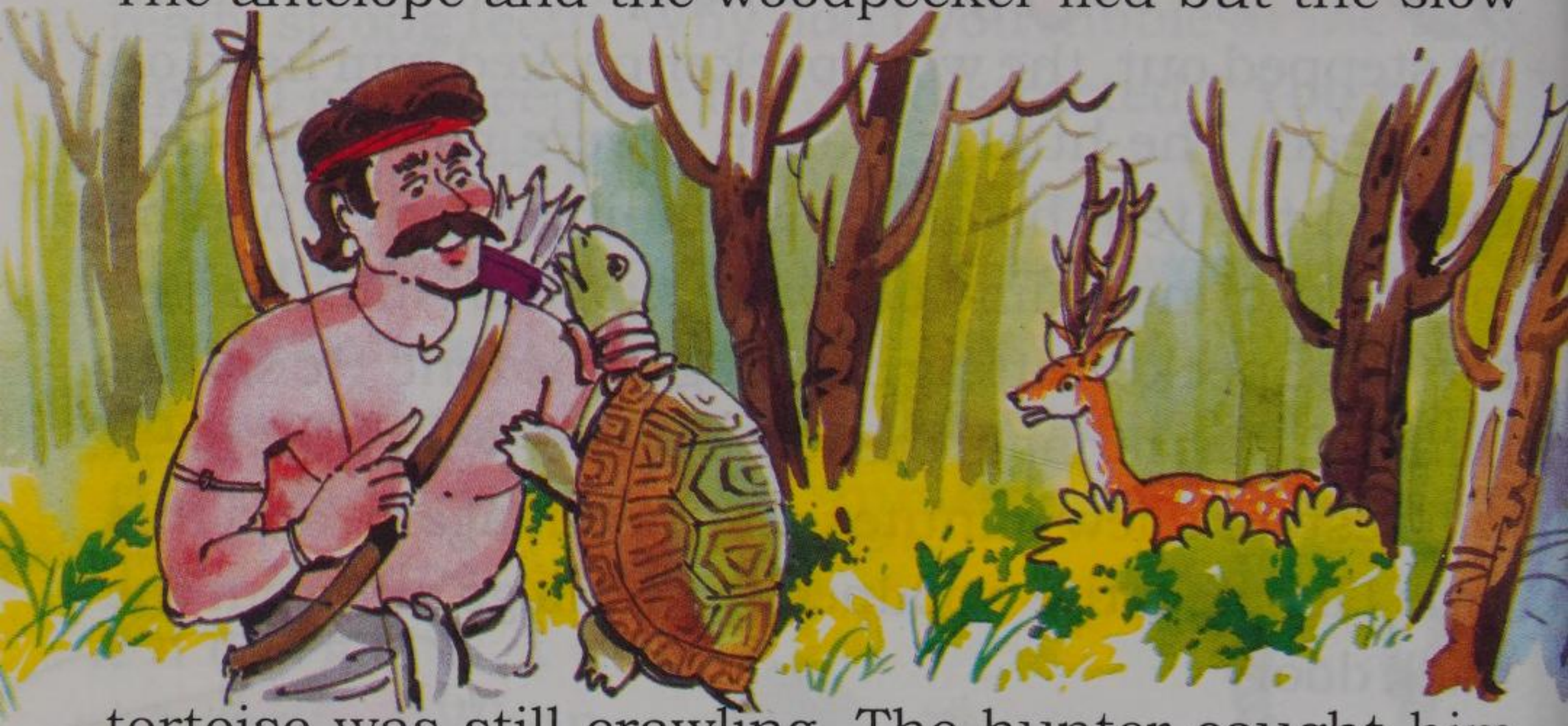
By that time the hunter had also heard the loud cries of the antelope. He knew that the antelope had been trapped in his trap. He was eager to go out to get his catch. So he hurriedly got out of the tent to get the antelope. But the moment he stepped out, the woodpecker pecked him hard on the head. The hunter was in severe pain. He went back to the tent holding his paining head. When he looked around to find out what had hurt him, he saw the woodpecker sitting on a peg of the tent. He said to himself, "Oh ! that is the woodpecker who hurt me. I will rest for a few minutes and go out again. and this time I'll befool the woodpecker. I will go out from the back door."

The woodpecker was also .very clever. He thought, "I must fly to the back of the tent. Surely the hunter will come out that way to escape my attacks."

So when the hunter came out of the back door, the woodpecker was ready to attack again. Once again the

hunter was badly hurt. To escape any more attacks, the hunter ran. He did not see where he was going. He soon crashed into a tree and fell unconscious. The woodpecker left the hunter and flew to where his friends were. When he reached his friends, the tortoise had freed the antelope just then. The woodpecker suddenly saw the hunter coming down the path. He said, "Friends, we must run away now. The hunter is coming here."

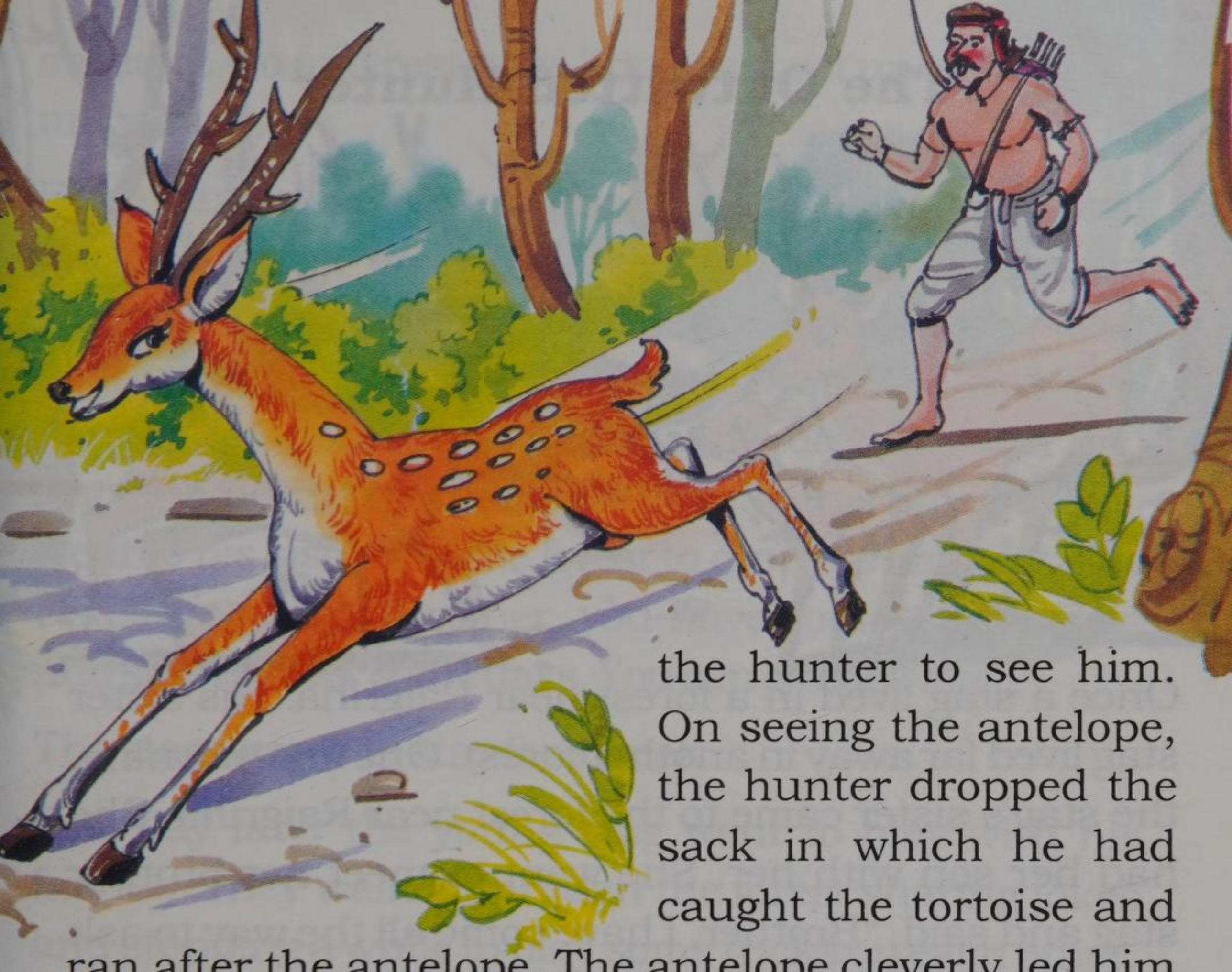
The antelope and the woodpecker fled but the slow



tortoise was still crawling. The hunter caught him and said, "You are responsible for freeing the antelope. So now you will serve as my lunch today."

Hearing the hunter's words, the antelope turned around and saw the tortoise in the hunter's grip. He thought, "If I go near the hunter, he'll spot me and leave the tortoise there, he'll try to catch me again. I'll run off when he chases me then the tortoise can escape."

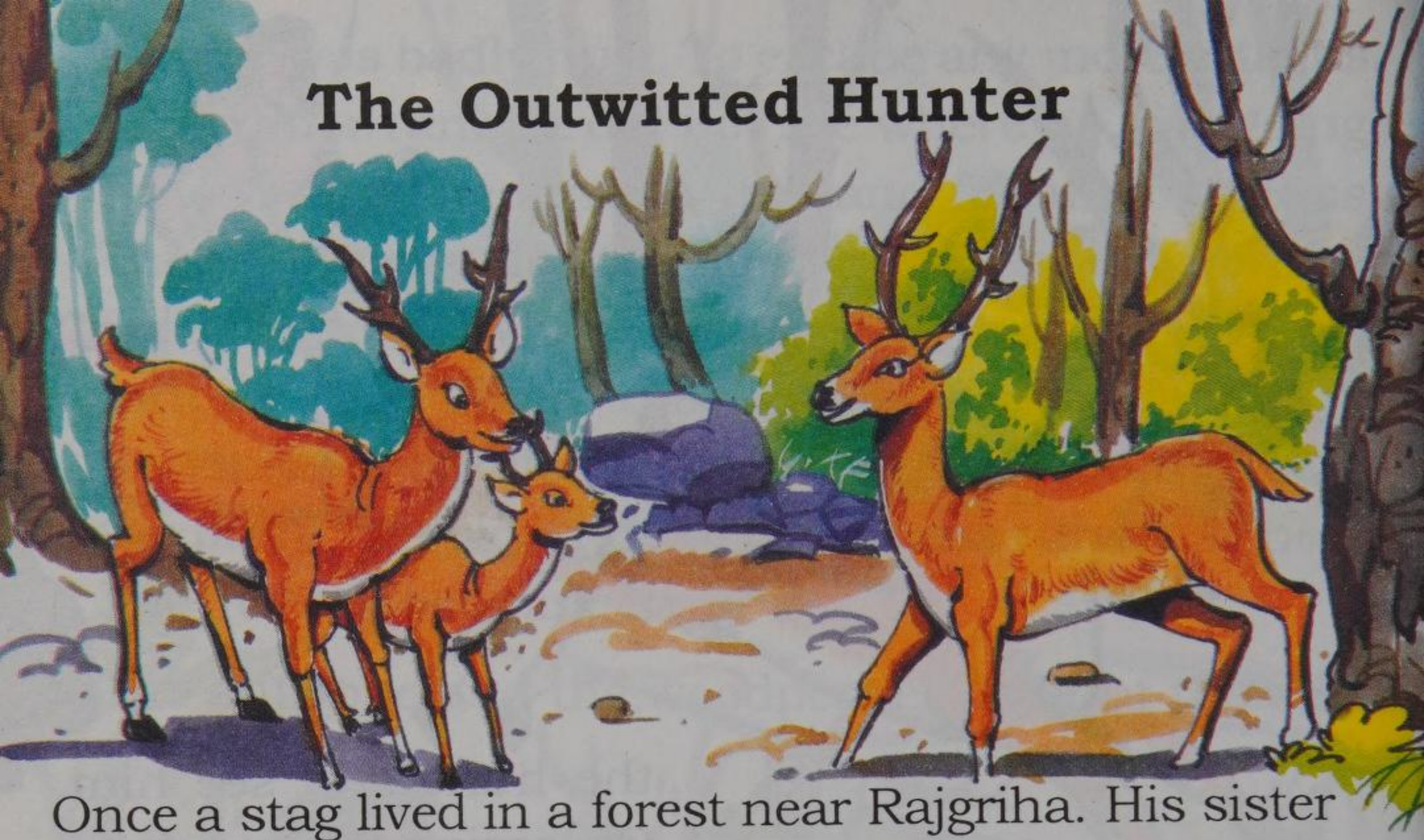
So the antelope deliberately went near enough for



the hunter to see him. On seeing the antelope, the hunter dropped the sack in which he had caught the tortoise and ran after the antelope. The antelope cleverly led him into a dark old cave he knew of. The antelope knew that once the hunter was inside the dark cave, he would find it impossible to come out. The foolish hunter followed the antelope into the dark cave. He was lost and could not find his way out. The clever antelope came out of the way he knew.

Soon the antelope reached where the tortoise lay in the sack. He freed the tortoise and in the meantime the woodpecker also reached his friends. Then the antelope told his friends about the hunter, and the friends had a hearty laugh.

The Outwitted Hunter



Once a stag lived in a forest near Rajgriha. His sister stag lived far away in another forest. One fine morning, the stag's sister came to the forest near Rajgriha. She had her son with her. She went to meet her brother stag and said, "Brother, I have come all the way to ask a favour of you."

"Why not, sister ? I'll do anything to help you," the stag replied. "Brother, in the forest where I live, I could not find a proper teacher for my young son. I have brought him here so that you can teach him something."

"Sister, what do you want me to teach him ?" asked the stag.

The sister stag said, "I want him to learn how to escape from traps, how to deceive predators and befool hunters. These skills are necessary for him to survive in the forest full of wild enemies and hunters."

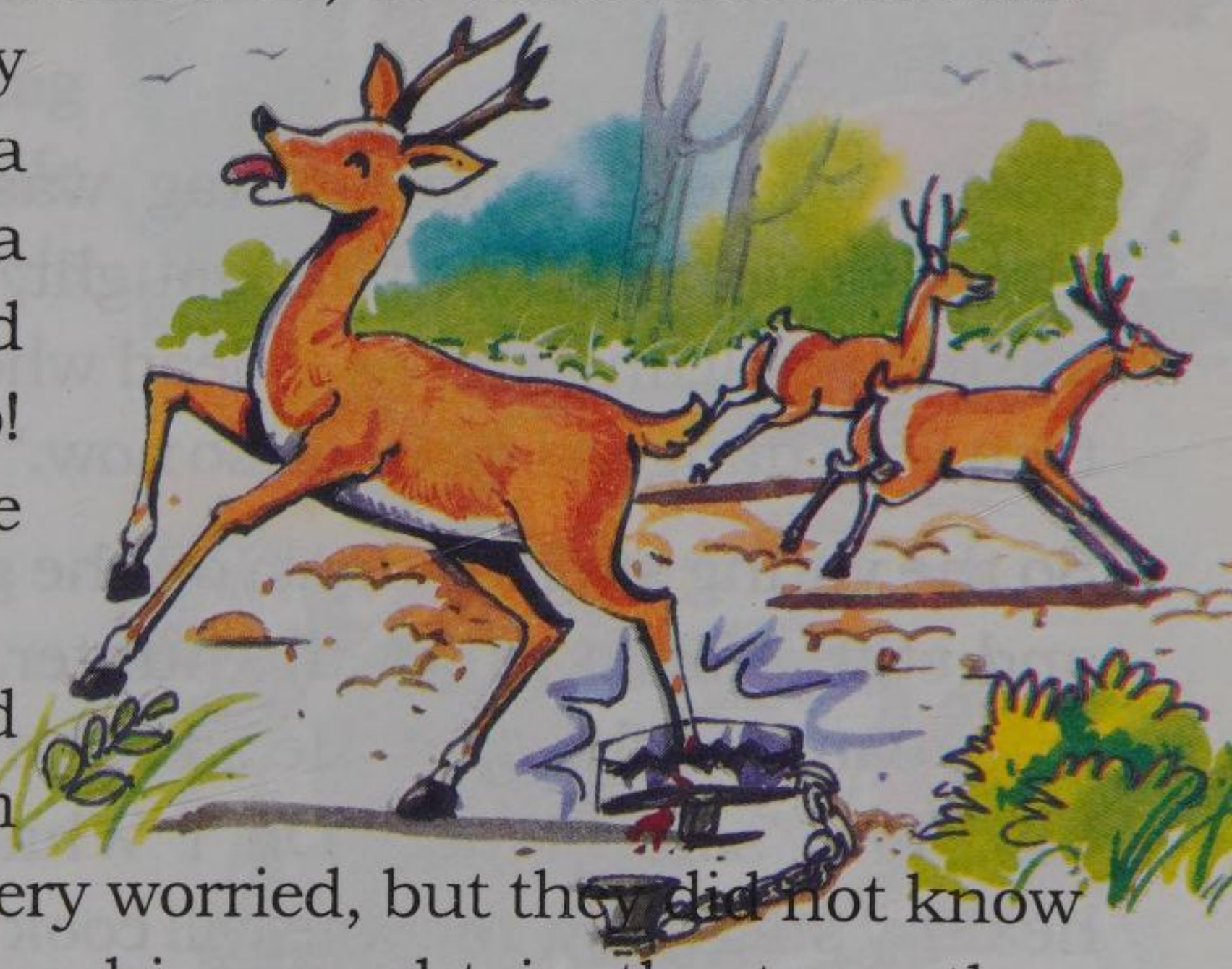
The stag turned to his nephew and said, "All right, from tomorrow I'll be your teacher and you'll be my

student. Go and rest now. You must get up early in the morning."

From next morning onwards, the stag's nephew learnt one trick each day. Each trick or lesson made him fearless. He soon gained confidence. Two months went past in the training. Meanwhile the stag's sister had gone back to her home forest. After some days her son had also decided to be with his mother. So this time the stag went to his sister's home forest to drop his nephew. The sister-stag said, "Brother, you have come so far. Rest and stay here for some days. You can go back later."

The stag agreed to stay for a week.

One day later the young stag went to play with his friends. They walked through the forest sharing jokes and stopping a while to play some tricks on each other. As the young stag walked on, he did not look around properly. Suddenly his feet caught in a trap laid out by a hunter. He called out in pain, "Help! someone please help me!"



His friends rushed to him. Seeing him trapped, they got very worried, but they did not know what to do. Leaving him caught in the trap, they rushed to his mother and said to her, "Aunty, your son

needs help. His feet have been caught in a trap. Please go to him quickly."

Hearing these words, the sister-stag rushed to her brother and said, "Brother, what do I do now ? My son is in trouble. His feet have been caught in a trap."

"Don't worry, sister. Today is the time for his test. Now you will see how he brings in use the lessons I taught him."

Back, where the young stag was trapped he was already thinking. Then he thought, "Uncle had taught me to lie still and stiff as if dead whenever caught in a trap or in danger. I must do so now."

So the young stag lay down on the ground. He lay still and stiff. After a while, the hunter, who had laid the trap, came to the spot. He saw the 'dead' stag in the trap and said aloud, "Oh ! What a beautiful and healthy stag ! Now my wife will cook it tonight and we'll have a feast. But what happened to it ? Oh ! It's dead and stiff. I hope it does not spoil by the time I take it

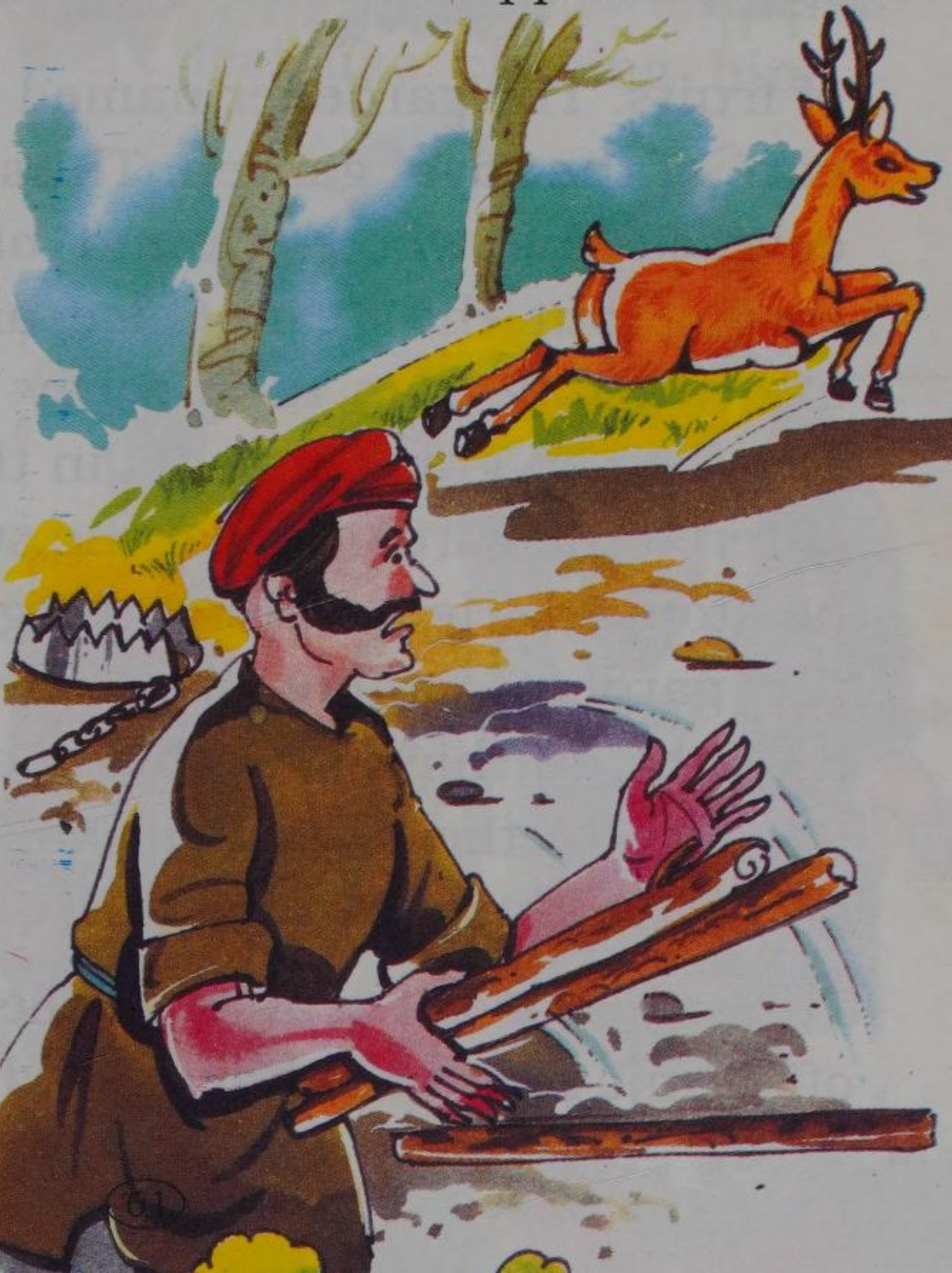
home. I think I'll cut up its flesh now, roast and eat it here itself. I should go and get some wood for the fire. I must free the poor dead stag of the trap. It cannot run away now !"

So the hunter freed the young stag's feet from the trap. Then he turned to get woods to start a fire. The minute the hunter left, the young stag stood up and ran off. Then he went straight home.

The young stag's mother was overjoyed to see her son. She embraced him and said, " My dear son, you are back. How did you get out of the trap ?"

At this, his brother the stag said, "It was the training I gave him. Because he had been a good student, so he remembered his lessons well and applied them correctly when and where required."

Thus, the young stag saved his own life without anyone's help.



The King's Lesson

Once there was a prosperous king in Varanasi. He had a large royal garden and an orchard full of fruits. The gardener named Sanjay took special care of the royal garden. Thus, fresh, green grass covered the whole ground of the royal garden throughout the year. Once an antelope strayed into the city from the nearby woods. He saw the juicy, green grass growing in the royal garden. He entered the garden to eat the sweet grass but then he stopped. He had seen the gardener working in the garden. Sanjay also saw the antelope. He thought, " I think that this poor antelope has lost the way to the forest. He has come here for the grass. He must be hungry."

The antelope got scared on seeing Sanjay and ran off. Sanjay felt bad that he had gone back hungry.

Next day, the antelope came again. Sanjay posed as if he had not seen him. The antelope ate some grass and went away. Then this continued for some days. Soon the antelope stopped fearing Sanjay. He used to graze on the grass, small shrubs and bushes in Sanjay's presence.

One fine evening, the king went for a stroll around the royal garden. He noticed that some grass and plants had been damaged. He called the gardener and said, "Sanjay, I see you have not been taking good care of these plants. What is wrong with you ?"

Sanjay replied, "Your Majesty, a beautiful golden antelope comes to graze here. He comes to fill his hungry stomach. I don't feel like chasing him away."

"An antelope!" The king got thoughtful. "If he is so beautiful and golden in colour, can you catch him for me ?"

"Yes, of course, Your Majesty!" Sanjay replied.

"And would you need any help for this task?"

"All I need is a pot full of honey and I'll get him right into the palace for you."

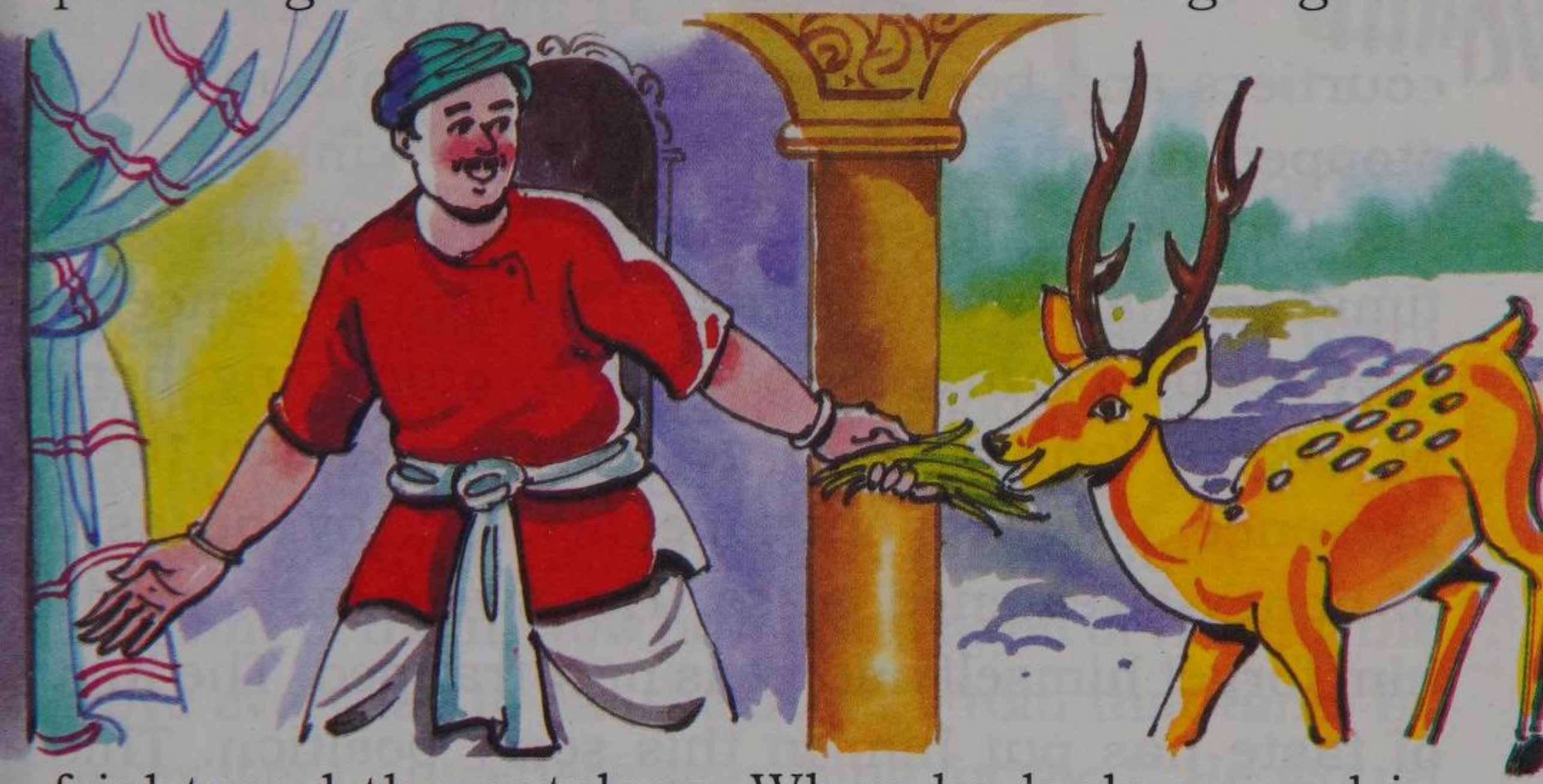
So the king ordered the royal cook to give Sanjay a large pot full of sweet honey. Sanjay took the pot of honey home.

Early next morning Sanjay took the honey to the royal garden. He coated the grass with honey. The grass grew along a path from the royal garden's gate to a small grove of trees in the garden. Sanjay hid in the tree grove to watch out for the antelope's arrival.

A few minutes later the antelope entered the royal garden's gate. He started grazing on the grass. As he ate the grass, he thought, "Oh, such juicy sweet grass ! It never tasted so sweet before."

The hungry antelope kept grazing on the grass that grew along the path. As he grazed and neared the tree grove, Sanjay came out

slowly. The antelope was startled into alertness. But when he saw Sanjay, he relaxed. Then Sanjay offered some honey-sweetened grass with his hands. The antelope ate the grass. Sanjay walked a few steps and kept offering the grass to the antelope. The hungry antelope followed him as he ate honey-sweetened grass. This way, gradually, Sanjay led the beautiful golden antelope into the king's palace. When they had entered the palace, Sanjay asked the guards to shut the doors of the palace gates. The sound of the large gates



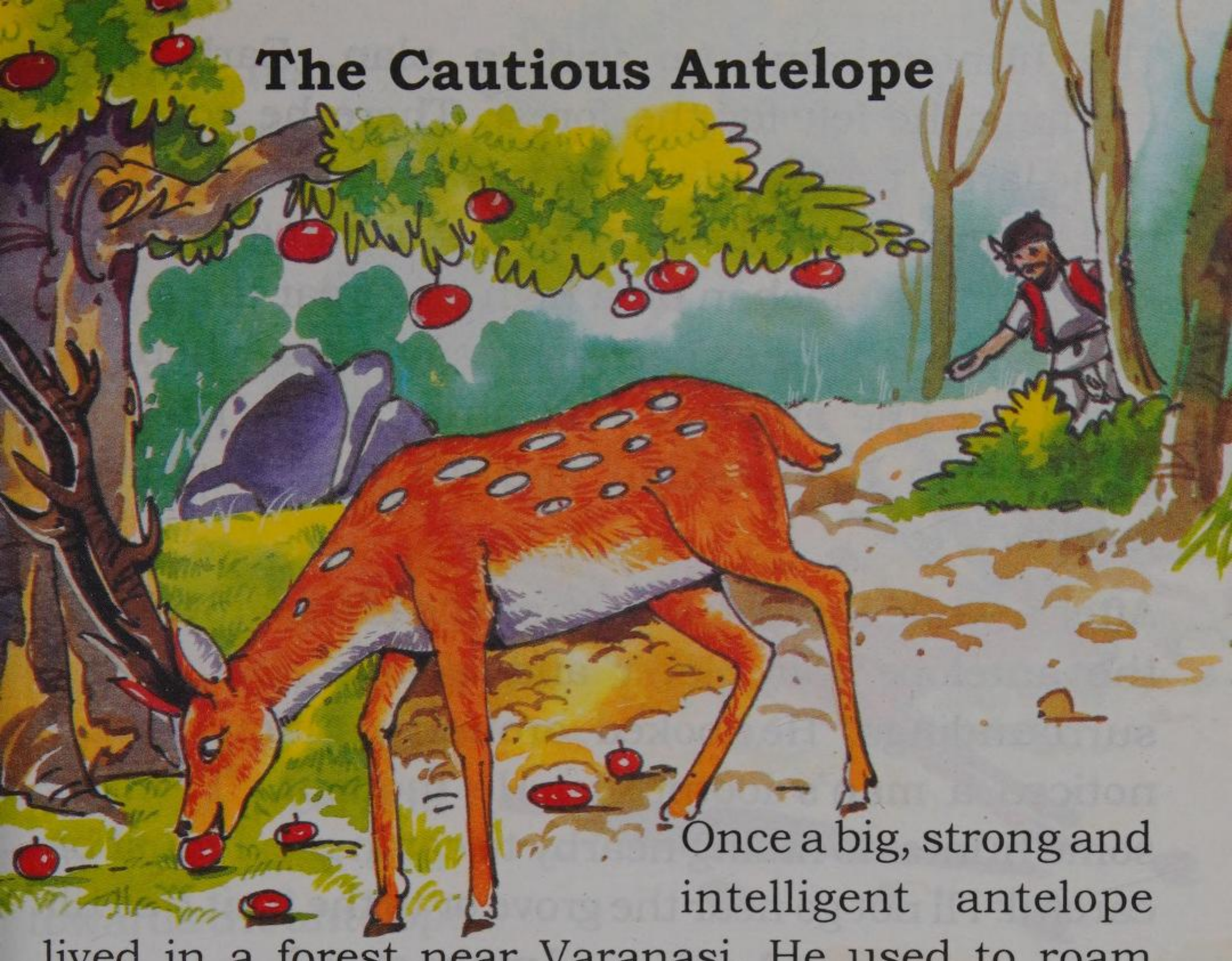
frightened the antelope. When he look around in fright, he felt even more scared. He was now in the royal court and many servants, guards, courtiers and the king were looking at him. He realized in panic that he had been tricked and trapped. In panic he started running around the royal court looking for a way to escape. He looked very desperate indeed. When the king saw the antelope's urge for freedom he felt sorry for the

animal.

The king looked around at his courtiers and began speaking. The antelope also stopped moving when he heard the king's voice. The king said, "Friends, antelopes are gentle and timid animals always afraid of human presence. If they see people in some place, they stop going there or take a long time to get accustomed to their presence. This poor antelope was lured by the taste of honey-sweetened grass. The sweet taste made him forget himself and he is now trapped. The lust of taste has put him in this sorry position. This event teaches us not to be led by the lust of taste. As a thankful reward for teaching us this lesson, I will now set this antelope free into the forest."

With these words the king got up. He was accompanied by Sanjay and some guards when he led the antelope to the forest. So the golden antelope was set free finally.

The Cautious Antelope



Once a big, strong and intelligent antelope lived in a forest near Varanasi. He used to roam around the forest in search of food everyday. One day he found a wild fruit tree growing in a grove. As he tasted a fruit, he found it sweet and juicy. So he ate some of them. Now he made a habit of visiting the grove everyday to eat the fruits. From that time, he never went anywhere searching for food. He would just go to the fruit tree and have his fill.

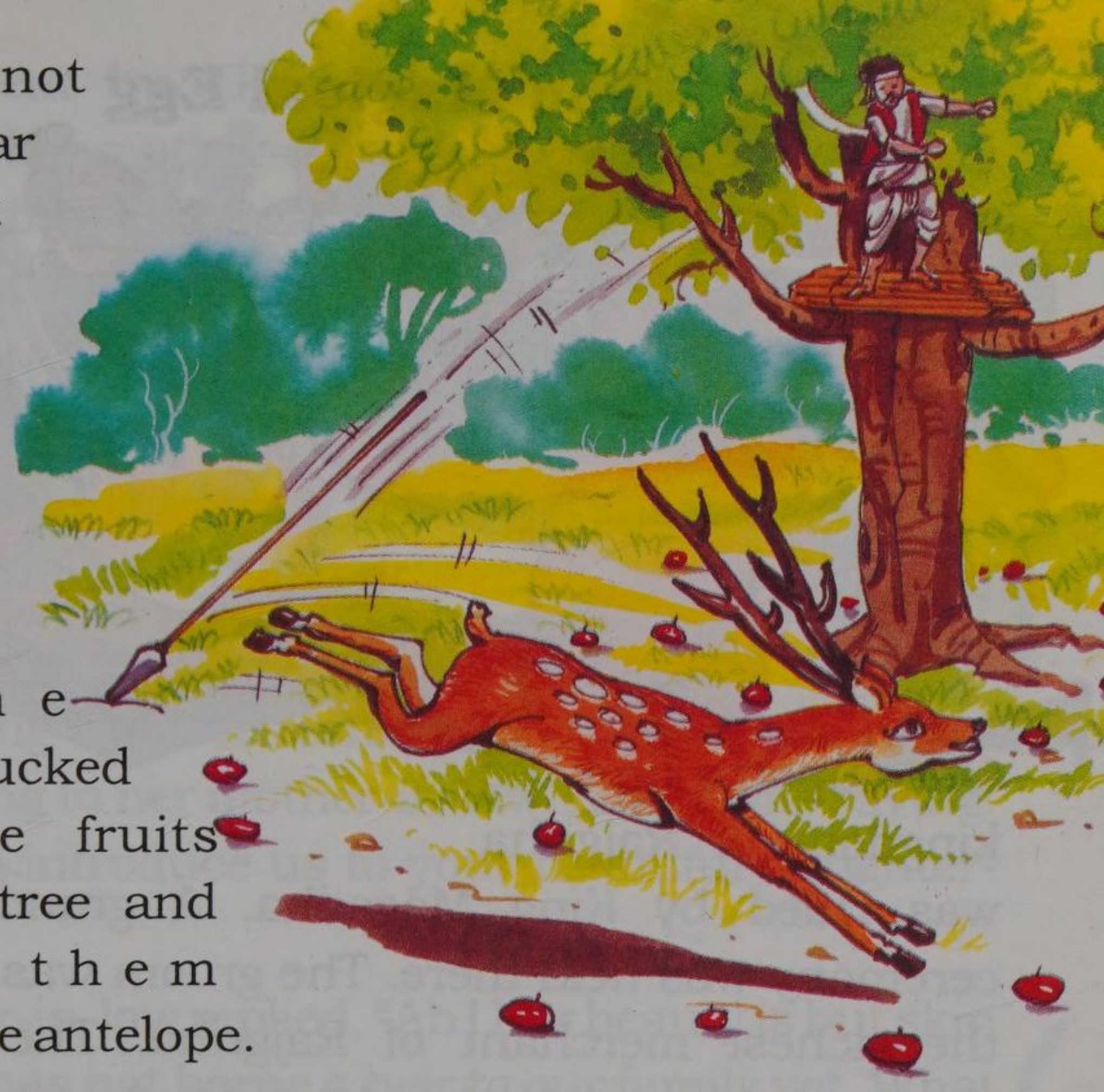
A hunter used to visit the forest to trap animals. He observed the antelope's habit for some days. He made sure of the time and spot, where the antelope came for the sweet wild fruits. He thought to himself, "If I can catch that big antelope, I will make a lot of money. I must catch him soon."

The hunter came up with a plan. Early next morning, he left for the forest. There he collected some large, thick and strong tree branches. Then he tied them with a rope to make a machan (platform). He fixed this machan on a high tree near the grove. Now he had a fine machan ready from where he could see the antelope and strike at it. Then he climbed on the machan and got ready with his javelin.

After a while the antelope came near the grove. But the antelope was clever and always alert to his surroundings. He looked around cautiously and noticed a man's footprints. He thought, "Perhaps some hunter is hiding nearby to catch me. I must be careful. I'll not go near the grove or to the fruit tree till I make sure."

As he stood thinking, the hunter saw him and thought, "Why is this

creature not coming near the fruit tree ? Let me throw some fruits to lure him nearer."

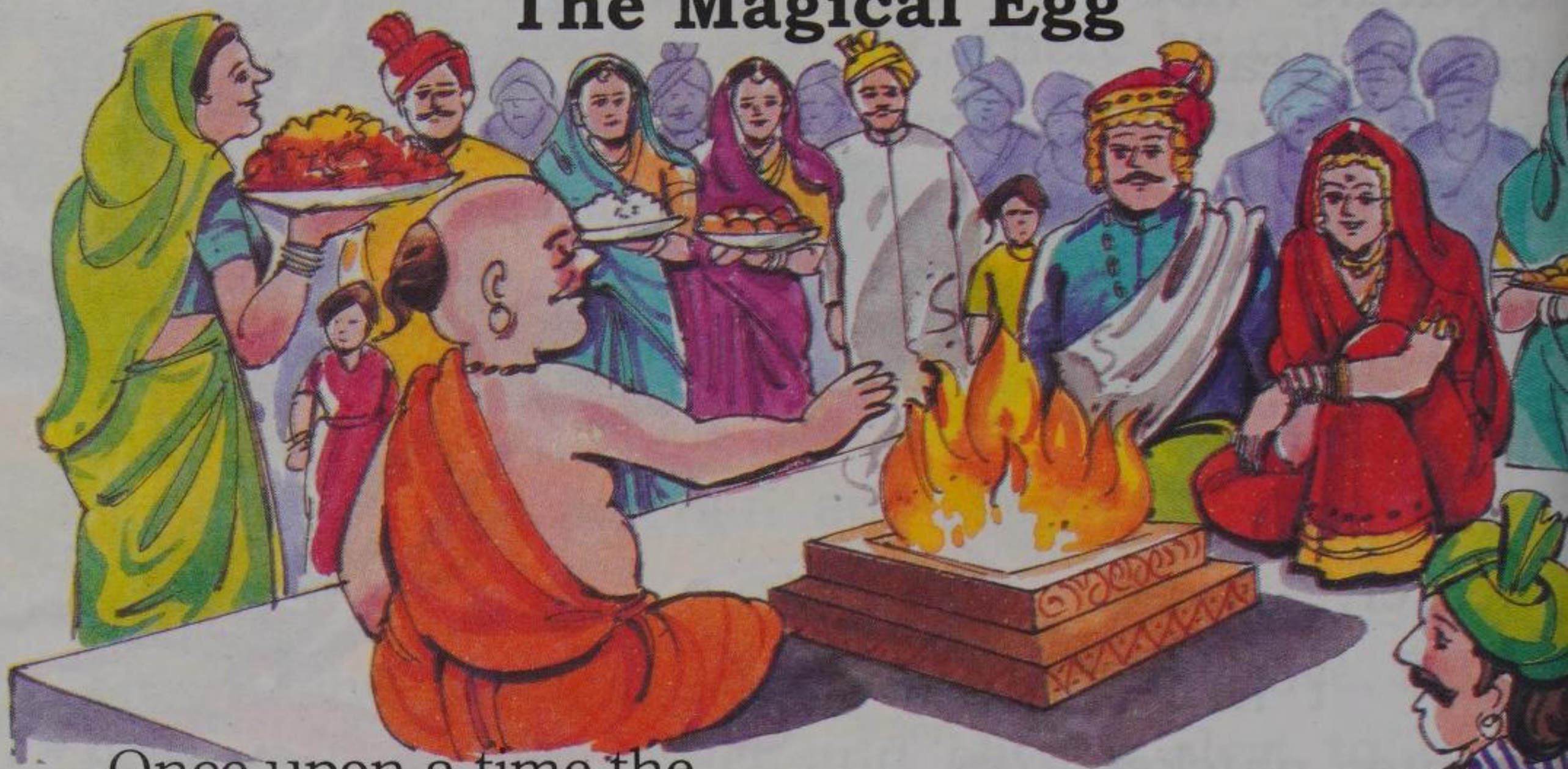


So the hunter plucked some ripe fruits from the tree and threw them towards the antelope.

When the hunter threw the fruits, the antelope looked in the direction and saw the machan on the tree but he could not see the hunter. Then the clever antelope thought of a plan and said aloud, "O talking tree, why are you throwing the fruits at me today instead of throwing them on the ground ? You always let them fall gently to the ground for me to eat. If you misbehave in such a way I won't be your friend anymore. I am going forever. Good bye !"

With these words, the clever antelope turned and walked off. The hunter felt that the chance of getting the antelope was slipping out of his hands so he threw the javelin at the animal. But he missed and the antelope ran off safe and happy.

The Magical Egg



Once upon a time the kingdom of Rajgriha was ruled by King Magadha. A grand marriage ceremony was held there. The groom was the son of the richest merchant of Rajgriha. The beautiful, demure bride was the daughter of Seth of Janapad. He had made great arrangements for tasty food, luxurious and comfortable living quarters for the groom's party and many costly gifts and ornaments for the newly weds. Everyone in the kingdom was discussing the marriage.

After the ceremony, the bride was seen off. In her in-laws' house, she was treated lovingly like a princess. When she entered the kitchen to work, her mother-in-law stopped her and said, "Oh no, dear ! What are you doing ? You are a newly wed bride. Don't ruin your soft hands by working ?"

Thus, in such ways the bride was taken care of with lots of love and was never allowed to work. Many

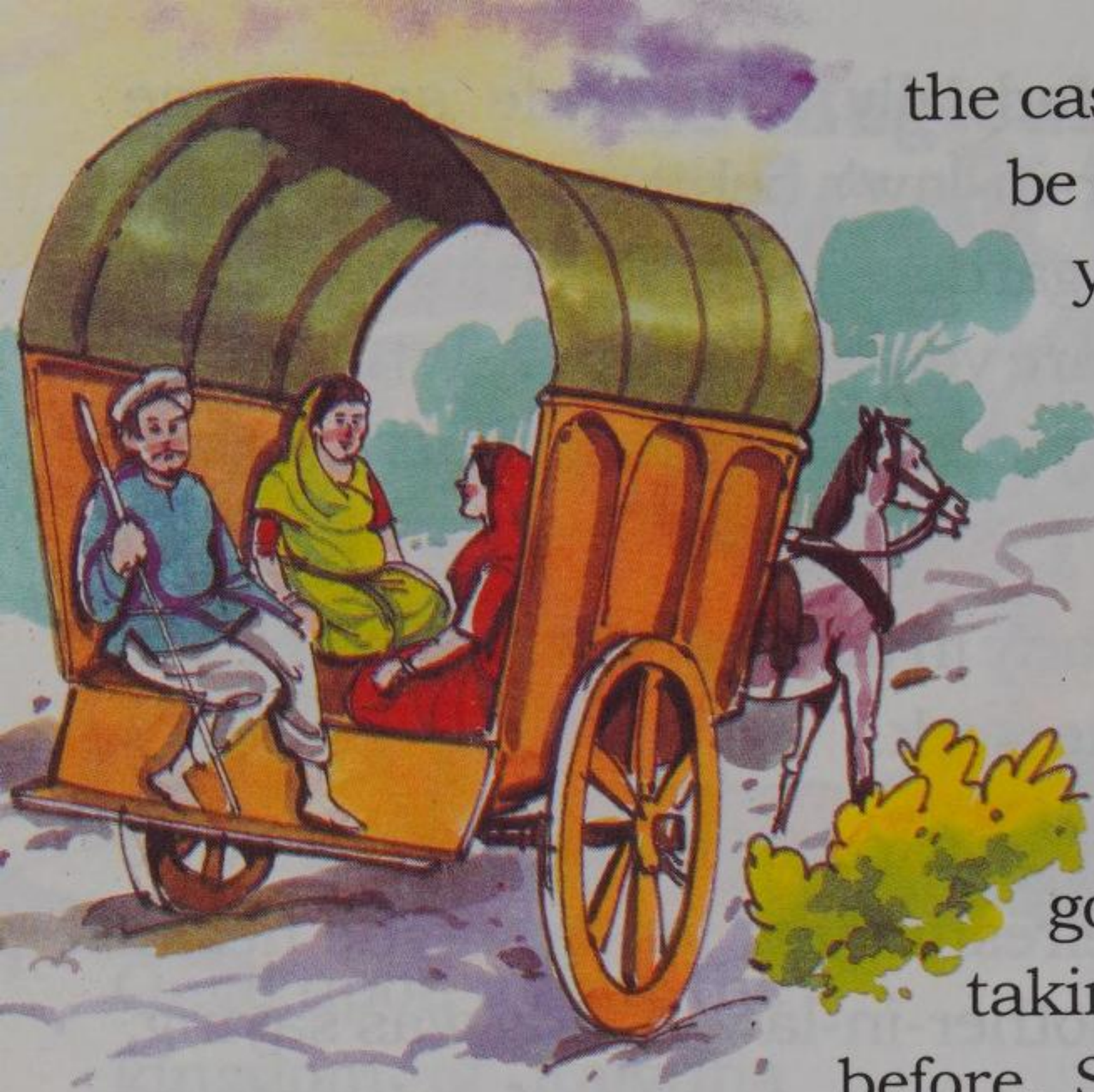
months went by. Gradually, the bride saw some changes in her mother-in-law's behaviour. Once when she was sitting in the garden her mother-in-law came there and said, "What are you doing here ? What a lazy woman you are. Don't you see there is so much work to be done at home ?".

The poor bride was nearly in tears as she rushed inside the house to tend to the work.

One day some ladies came to her house. As the bride was bringing some refreshments for them she heard them talking to her mother-in-law. A lady was saying, "Won't you introduce us to your beautiful daughter-in-law ?"

The mother-in-law replied, "Ah ! Her beauty is but skin deep. She has not borne a heir to our family yet. What is the use of such a daughter-in-law ?"

The bride silently came, served the refreshments to the guests and retired to her chamber. As she sat crying in her room, her maid asked why she was sad. The bride told her everything. At this, the maid suggested, "Don't worry, madam. If that is



the case you can pretend to be carrying a baby. Then you'll surely regain the love as before."

So the bride lied to her mother-in-law that she was pregnant. At once her mother-in-law got happy. She started taking care of her as before. She used to fulfill all the wishes of the bride and made delicious food for her to eat. A few months later, the bride went to get permission to visit her parents' house. She wanted to follow the custom of delivering the child in the parents' house. The permission was granted by her in-laws.

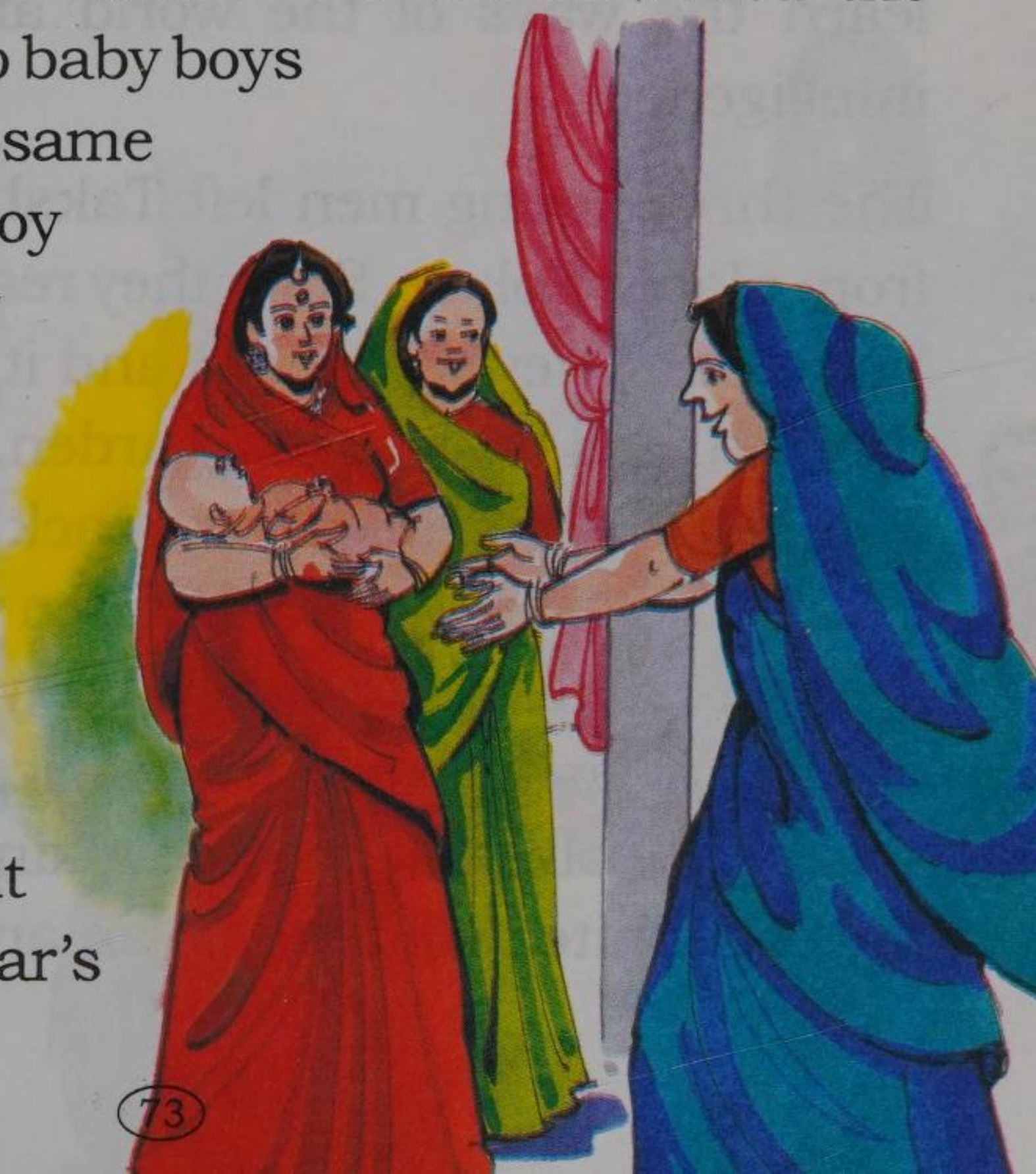
Next morning the bride, her maid and an attendant left for Janapad in a horse chariot. As they travelled on, they saw a caravan and joined it because the attendant said, "Madam, if we travel with the caravan, we will be safe from bandits and we will have some company, too."

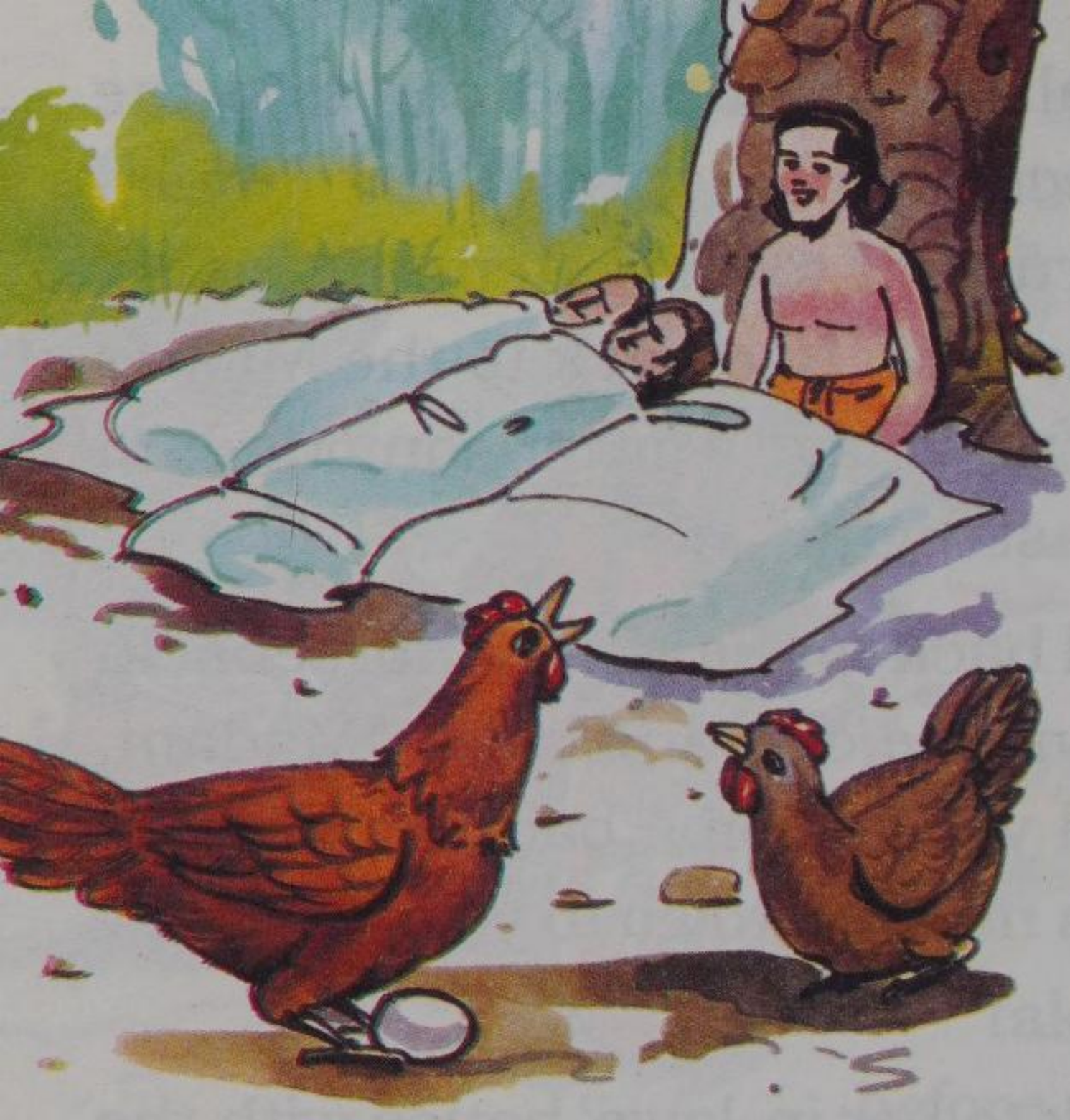
At night the caravan camped near a small forest. The attendant erected two tents. He slept in one and the bride and her maid slept in the other. In the morning, the bride got up late. She saw that the people of the caravan had already left. Then she saw a baby boy lying under a Nigrodha (banyan) tree. She picked it up.

Just then her maid also woke up and came to the spot. Both of them decided to adopt the abandoned baby boy. The maid rushed to the attendant's tent and woke him up. She said, "Go back to the Master and tell him that they now have a grandson. Madam delivered a baby boy last night."

The attendant rushed back to the city on horseback. He returned soon from the city and said, "Madam, the Master has asked you to come back home with the baby boy. There is no need to go to your parents' house anyway."

So the bride went back to her in-laws' house with the baby boy. She was welcomed with great pomp and show. Then the baby boy was named Nigrodha Kumar by his mother as the bride had found him under a nigrodha (banyan) tree. But the secret was known only to the bride and her maid. A servant informed the baby's father that two baby boys had been born the same night in the city. A boy was born to a weaver and was named Pottik and a boy born in a merchant's house had been named Shakha. Soon the babies were brought to Nigrodha Kumar's





house to give him company as he grew up. Years went by and the boys grew up playing with each other. Pottik, the weaver's son, showed his sense of fairness even as they were young children. When they were eleven years old, they were sent to Takshashila to study. Nigrodha Kumar's father paid for Pottik's education as his poor weaver father could not afford it. The young boys studied well at Takshashila and grew into intelligent, smart young men. Then the three friends decided to travel a while to learn the ways of the world and to broaden their intelligence.

The three young men left Takshashila and travelled from place to place. Soon they reached the outskirts of Varanasi. They were tired and it was late evening, so they decided to sleep in a garden. Early next morning, Pottik was awakened by the cackling of a hen. She was looking very happy. Another hen was asking her, "Why are you cackling so happily today ?" The hen replied, "I am happy as I have laid a magical egg. One, who eats this egg's yolk, will become a king. The one, who eats the egg-white, will become an army commander. The

person, who consumes the egg-shell, will become a treasurer."

The hens then went off to look for food. Pottik went and took the egg with magical power. He then cooked some porridge. He put the egg's yolk in Nigrodha's bowl, the egg-white in Shaka's bowl and mixed the crushed egg-shell in his own porridge. When Nigrodha and Shaka had eaten their breakfast, Pottik told them about the magical egg. They decided to see if the hen's words came true. Shaka felt angry at Pottik for not feeding him yolk, but he did not show this. After refreshing themselves, the three friends entered Varanasi. There they were received warmly by the owner of the first house. At lunch, the owner told them, "Our childless king died seven days ago. According to tradition, a flower-decked horse chariot will be set free in the kingdom. The person near whom the chariot stops will rule Varanasi."

After lunch the three friends left the man's house. They decided to take a nap in a park. Nigrodha slept on a stone seat, while Pottik and Shaka slept on the steps away from the park's entrance. As they slept, the flower-

decked horse chariot came and stopped near the park. The people looked in the park and saw Nigrodha sleeping on the stone seat. They woke him up and told him he had been chosen the King of Varanasi. After becoming the king of Varanasi, Nigrodha Kumar appointed Shaka as the army commander. Pottik became his personal adviser and constant companion.

After some days Nigrodha started missing his parents. He called Shaka and said, "Why don't you go and call my parents here?"

"No, I cannot go now." Shaka said. "I am training the soldiers for the battle."

Then Nigrodha sent Pottik for the same task. Pottik left Varanasi to go and fetch Nigrodha's parents. But Nigrodha's parents refused to leave their ancestral home. When Pottik visited Shaka's parents and his own house, he received the same answer. He returned to Varanasi with a heavy heart. As he entered Varanasi he felt very tired. As Shaka's home was nearby, he went there to rest a while before going to Nigrodha. When the guards announced Pottik's arrival at the mansion gates to Shaka, he thought, "Ah, Pottik ! Now I'll take my revenge as he gave the magic egg's yolk to

Nigrodha to make him a king. I'll teach him a lesson now."

So he turned to the guard and said, "I have no friend called Pottik. Throw him away from my mansion gates."

The guards obeyed Shaka's orders. Pottik was beaten, insulted and not allowed to enter Shaka's mansion. In his tired state, Pottik went to Nigrodha's palace. When the guards announced his arrival, King Nigrodha got up. He went to the palace gates and embraced Pottik. He took him to his private chamber. He ordered the servants to give tired Pottik a massage and a hot bath. Then hot lunch was served for Pottik and Nigrodha sat beside him to share the food. In due time, Pottik told Nigrodha that none of their parents wanted to come to Varanasi. Then he told him about how Shaka had treated him. This news angered King Nigrodha. Shaka had arrived to meet him. On seeing him, King Nigrodha got up and said, "So you do not know Pottik. You have no friend by this name. Don't you know the present luxurious and comfortable lives we are leading are because of Pottik ? He gave the magical egg

in the porridge to us. The egg's magic came true. Pottik could have eaten the yolk himself to be a king. But he was not an ungrateful man like you. A favour for a noble man always pays and a favour for an ungrateful man never reaps like a burnt seed. Guards take him away and kill him."

But Pottik intervened and said, "Nigrodha, please forgive Shaka. After all he is our childhood friend."

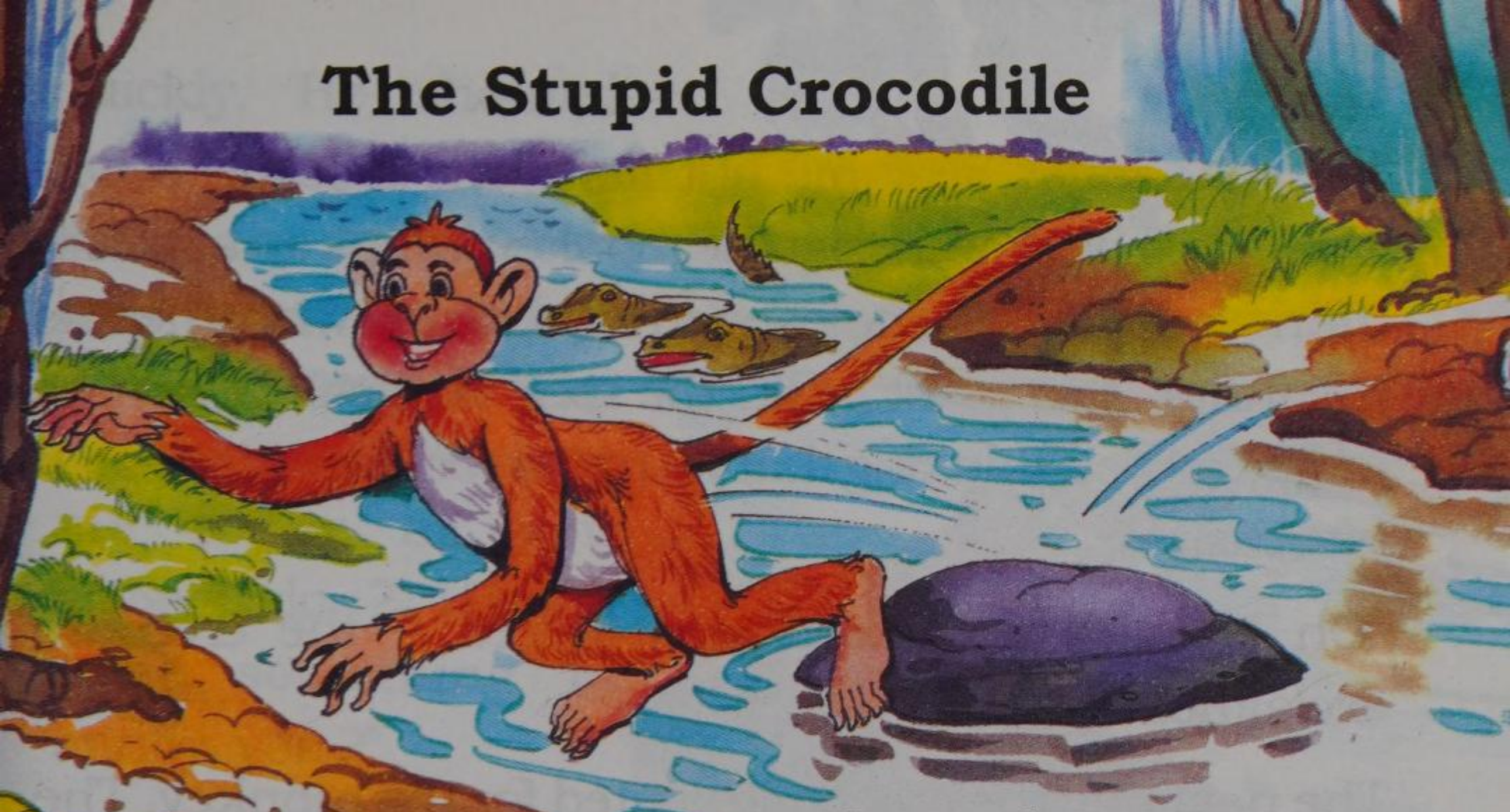
"All right," said Nigrodha. "I'll not kill him but he will be banished from my kingdom and you will be my army commander."

"But Nigrodha," Pottik protested, "I do not know anything about army as well as battle."

"Then you can be my treasurer. You will keep records of taxes paid by people and will be responsible of the royal treasury."

Pottik accepted the post gladly. Thus, the two friends lived in Varanasi for many years as king and royal treasurer. The magical egg had proved its true powers.

The Stupid Crocodile



Once there was an island in the middle of a river. Many fruit trees with sweet fruits grew on it. A monkey saw the fruit trees and wanted to eat the sweet fruits. As he stood on the bank, he saw a huge rock jutting out of the river water. He thought, "If I can jump on the rock, then from there I can leap onto the island easily for the rock is midway."

So the monkey jumped onto the rock and from there onto the tiny island. Soon he was enjoying the sweet fruits from the trees.

Nearby on the far bank of the river, a crocodile lived with his wife. He had many a times tried to catch the monkey. But the clever monkey had always escaped his clutches. One morning his wife said, "You have failed to catch the monkey. I want to taste his sweet flesh. Listen to my new plan to catch him."

"No, no !" the crocodile protested. "I cannot do anything to

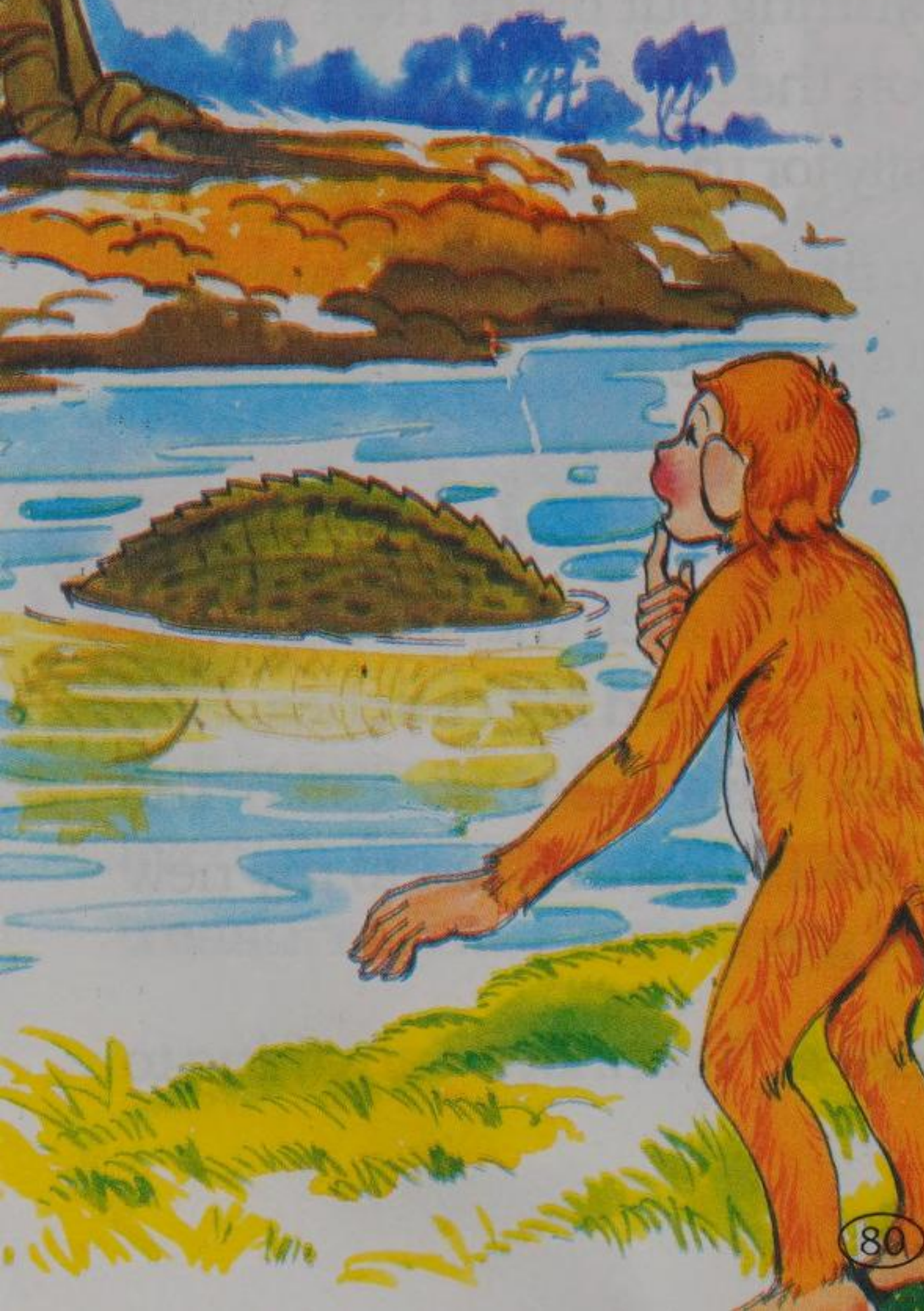
catch him."

"No, you must hear me out first," the crocodile's wife insisted, "I have seen that the monkey jumps on a rock in the river. From there he leaps on to the island where he eats the fruits. You must lie on the rock very still. When he jumps on you thinking that you are a rock, you can catch him easily."

"Oh ! That's a brilliant idea indeed !" the crocodile exclaimed in glee.

The next day the crocodile waited for the monkey. The monkey jumped onto the rock and leapt onto the island. When the monkey got busy eating the fruits, the crocodile swam to the rock. He lay on the rock with his tail and head submerged in water. Only his back was visible outside like a rock. When the monkey had his fill, he turned to go back to the river bank. He saw the rock and thought, "The rock looks strangely large to me. It was not so big when I came here. Oh! I think the crocodile is upto his trick once more. He is lying there acting as a rock."

So the monkey thought of a plan very



quickly. He shouted very loudly, "Hello Rock, my friend. You look rather big today. What's wrong ? Why did you not welcome me today as you always do ? Have I done something to annoy you?"

Hearing these words, the crocodile thought, "It means this rock talks to the monkey. I better speak up as the rock or the monkey will get suspicious." So he said, "Welcome, Monkey, how are you ?"

The monkey said, "I am so happy that you are not angry but why are you looking so big ?"

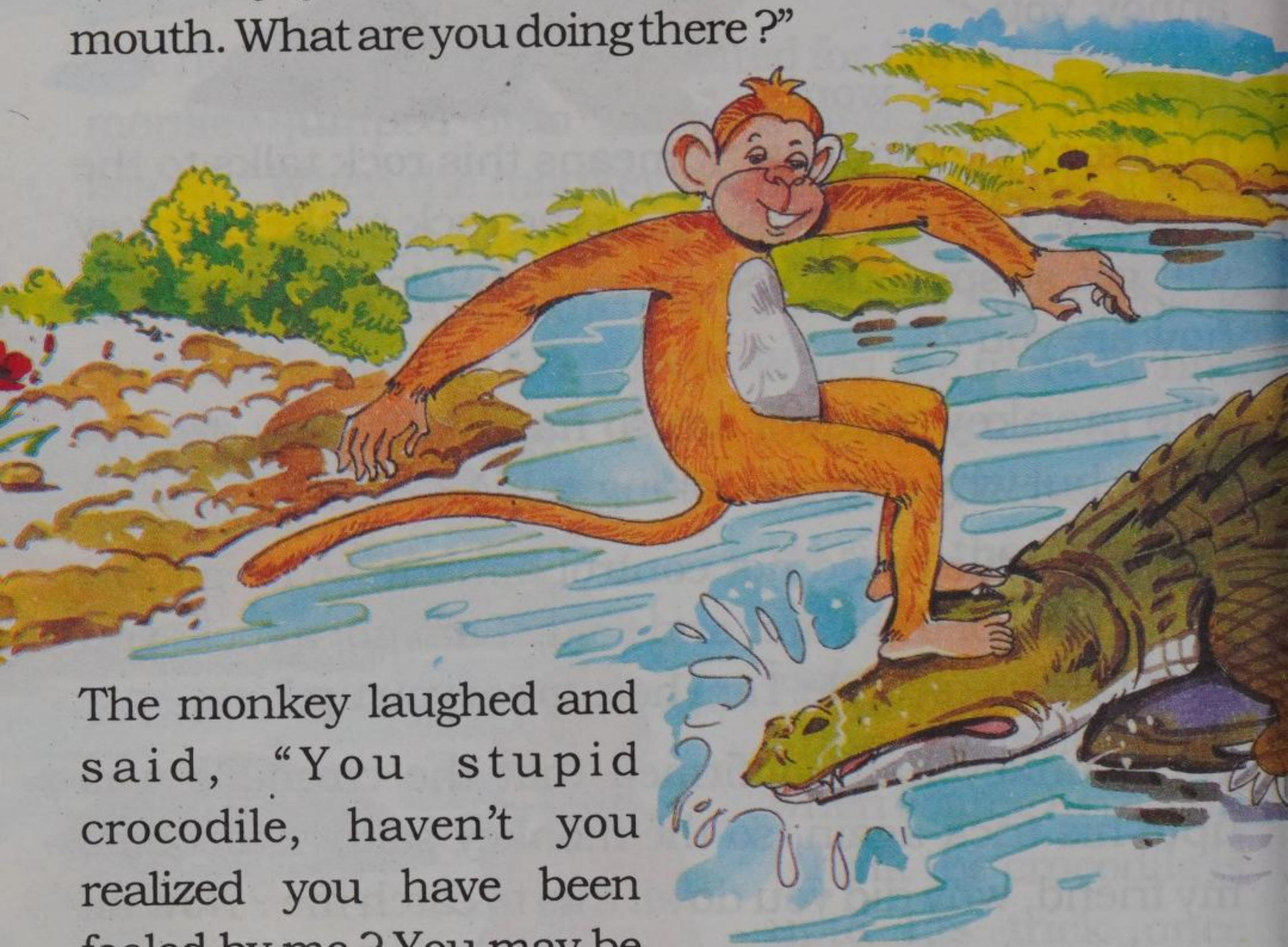
The crocodile could not control himself, so he got his mouth out of the water and said, "I am not a rock, you fool ! I am a crocodile. I am here to eat you up."

The monkey had confirmed that the crocodile was upto his trick again, so the monkey said, "Crocodile, my friend, why did you do all this to catch me ? Now all you have to do is open your mouth wide. I'll jump straight into your mouth and you can eat me."

The crocodile felt happy at the monkey's suggestion. He did not realize that the monkey had said this with a purpose. The monkey had observed that every time the

crocodile opened his mouth wide, his eyes would close automatically.

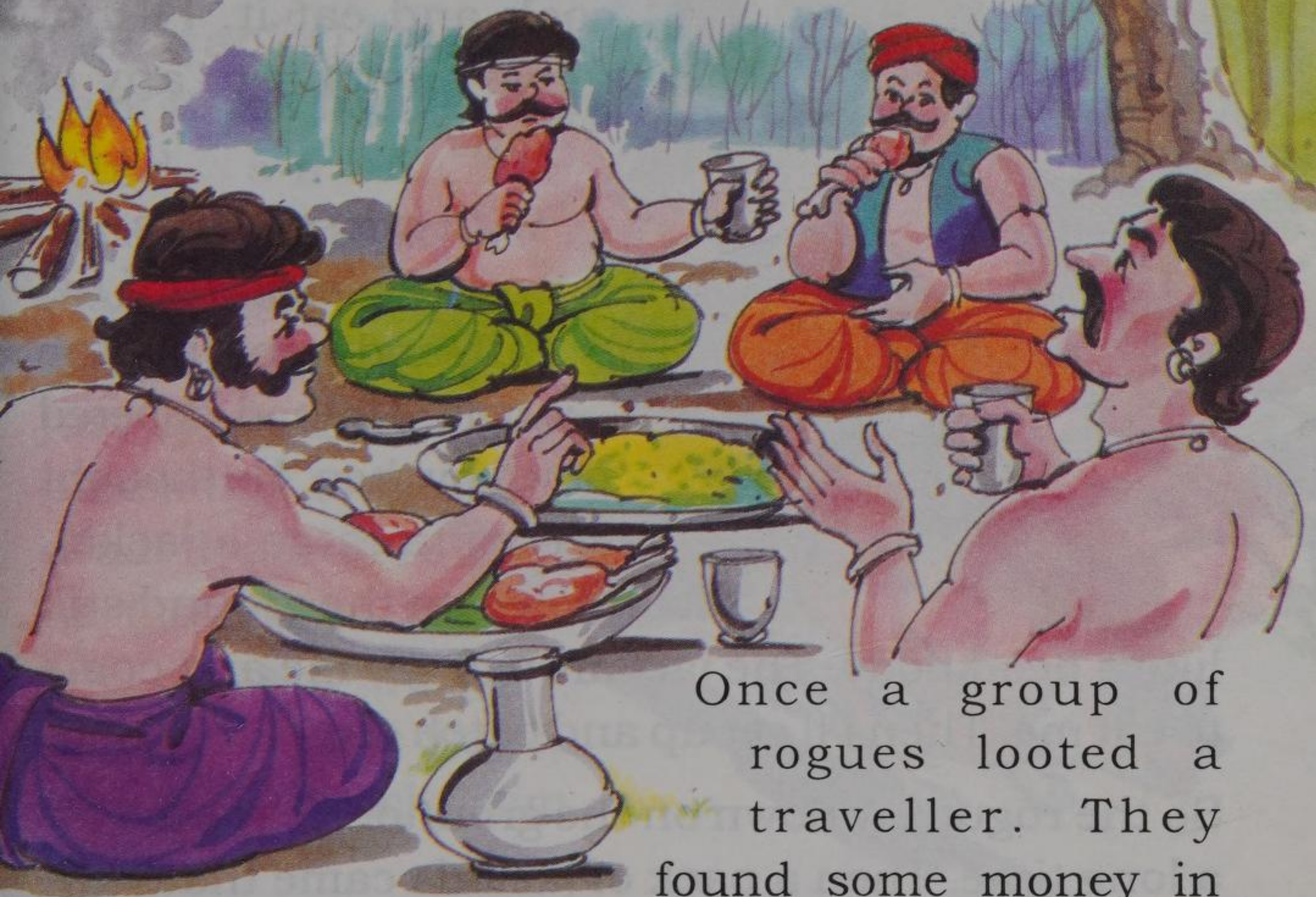
The stupid crocodile positioned himself on the rock with his wide opened mouth and closed eyes. The clever monkey leapt on the crocodile's head and from there jumped safely back to the river bank. The poor crocodile did not even realize what hit him. He recovered himself and saw the monkey on the river bank. He called out to him, "Hey, you monkey ! You promised to jump into my mouth. What are you doing there ?"



The monkey laughed and said, "You stupid crocodile, haven't you realized you have been fooled by me ? You may be bigger than me but you are also a bigger fool. You can never be cleverer than me."

So as usual the crocodile could not get the monkey for his wife's lunch.

The Jackal's Clever Plan

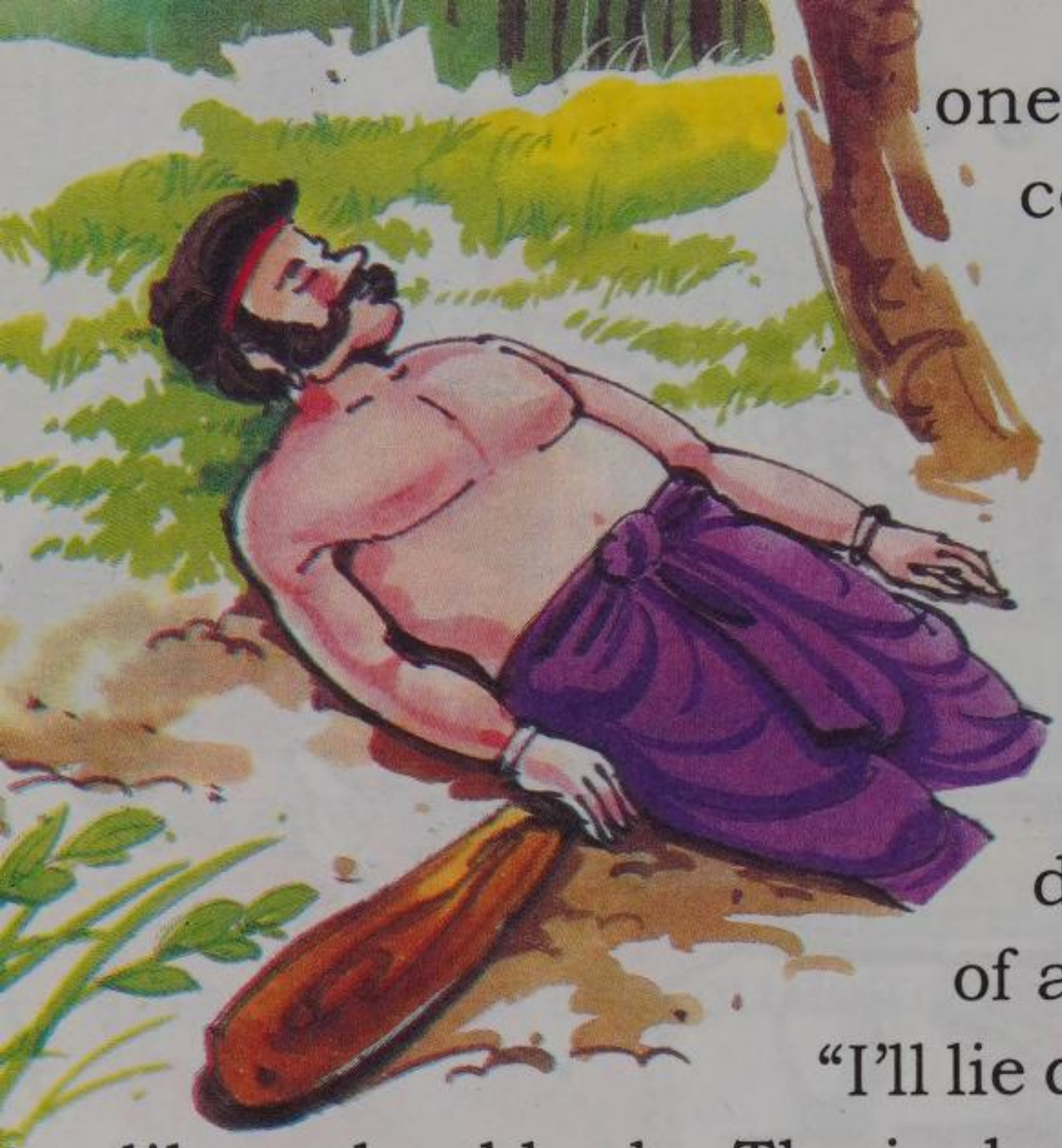


Once a group of rogues looted a traveller. They found some money in the traveller's bag and decided to have a feast. They bought wine, fruits, meat and rice etc. from the market. Then they went to the outskirts of the city near the jungle. There they had a grand lunch and tasted the wine. Then one of them got up and said, "I want some more meat."

The other rogues replied, "There's no more meat left for you. You can take some more rice and all the remaining wine if you wish to."

"No, no," the drunk rogue shouted.

"I want more meat for myself. If you don't want to give me any, I'll get some for myself. I am going into the jungle to catch some jackals. Then I'll kill



one of them, get its meat, cook and eat it. I'll not give any of it to any of you."

With these words the rogue picked up his club and went into the jungle. He had sobered down by then. He thought of a plan to catch a jackal, "I'll lie down on the ground still like a dead body. The jackals will see me and come to eat me. Then I'll get up and catch one of them."

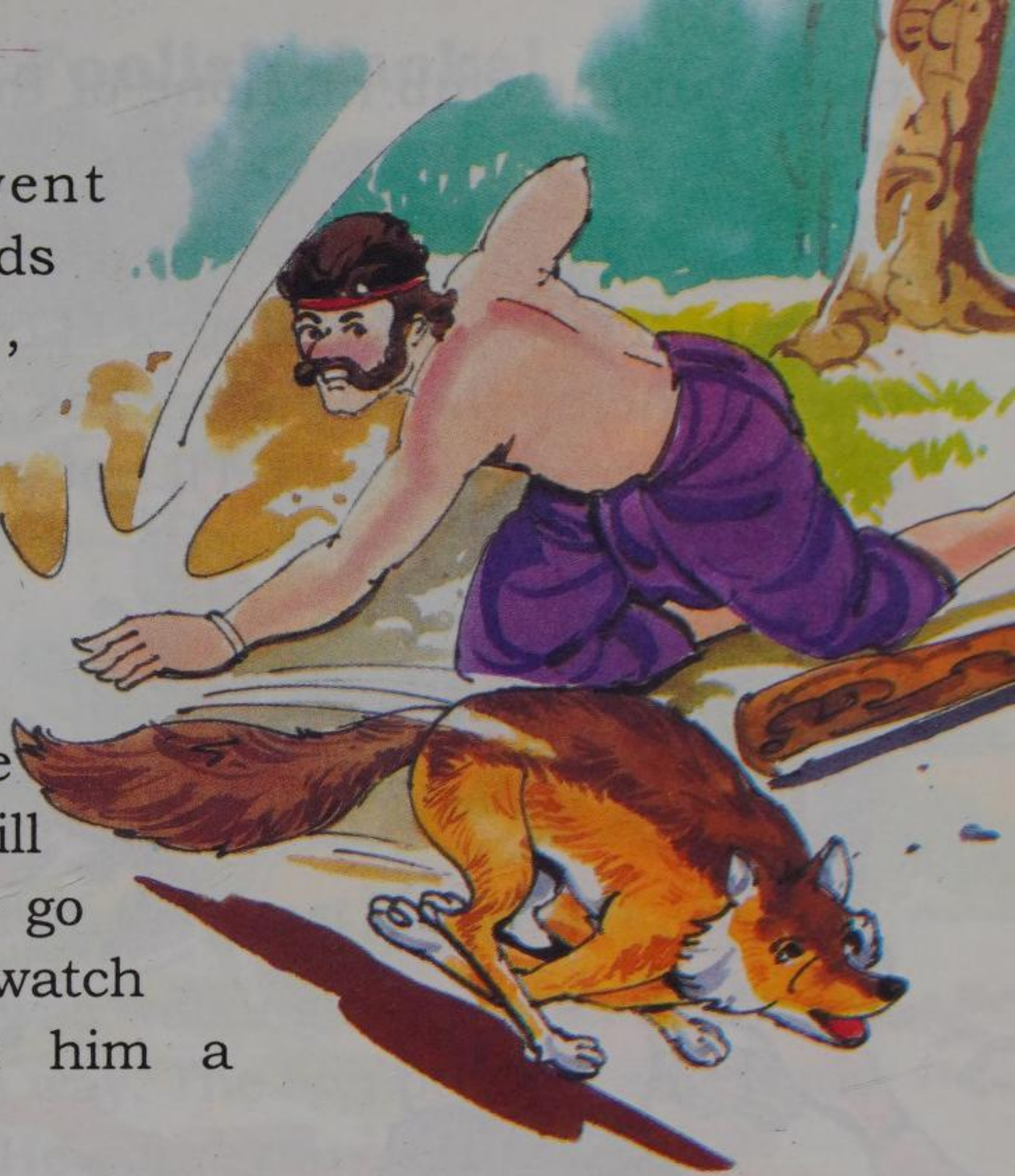
So the rogue lay down on the ground. He waited for a long time. Then a pack of jackals came that way. One of them saw the rogue lying on the ground. He said, "Friends, look at that man. He is dead. Let us go and feast on him."

"No, wait a minute," cautioned a clever jackal. "Let me confirm if he is really dead as he looks."

The jackal went nearer still keeping a safe distance. Then he sniffed the air and said aloud, "Hum ! Just as I thought. I can smell a

living man."

The jackal went back to his friends and said, "Friends, that man lying there is not dead. He is just lying there pretending to be dead. I am sure he intends to kill one of us if we go near him. Just watch me as I teach him a lesson."



The other jackals hid behind bushes as the clever jackal went near the rogue. He went stealthily without making any sound. Slowly he went near the rogue's club. The rogue held it in his hand even as he lay. The jackal tugged at the club. The rogue felt the tug. He thought to himself, "It surely must be a jackal. I better tighten my grip on the club and try to catch him by the other hand."

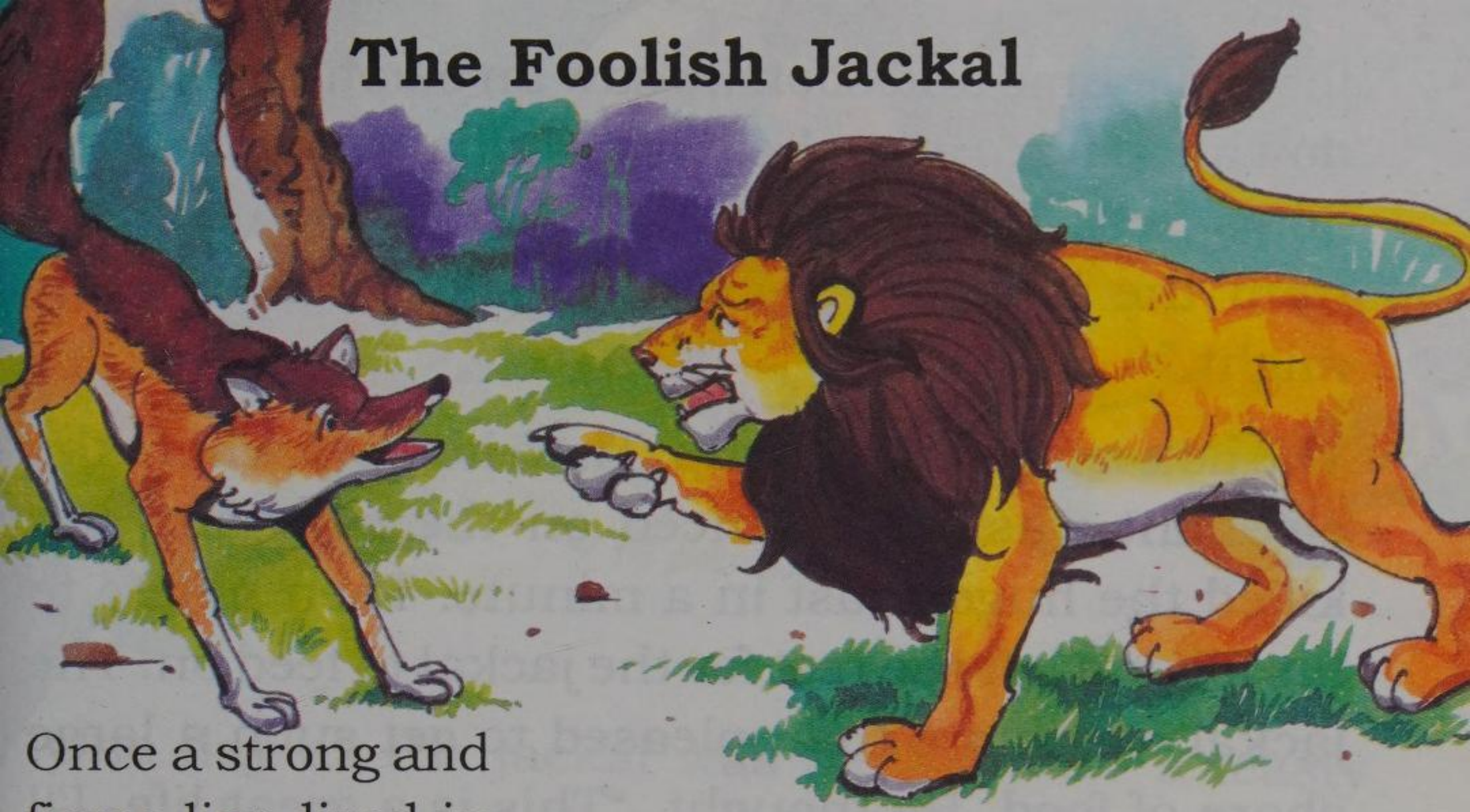
So he tightened the grip on the club and attack him by the other hand but the jackal suddenly let go off of the club with a strong jerk, bite hard on the rogue's hand and ran behind a bush nearby. In anger the rogue looked around and saw the pack of jackals running off. The rogue threw the club at

them but the club hit none of them. The jackals fled.

The rogue could not get any jackal so he thought to himself, "Oh ! What bad luck ! I could not even hit one of them. No jackal means no meat. Now I cannot face my friends. I'll not go to them. I'll go home and rest."

So the shame faced rogue went home defeated by a jackal's clever plan.

The Foolish Jackal



Once a strong and fierce lion lived in a forest. All animals in the forest feared him.

One day the lion was walking down a path when a jackal crossed his way. The lion became angry and roared, "You fool ! How dare you cross my path ?"

The jackal knew of the lion's anger so to escape punishment he said, "Sir, I was looking for you. I would like to serve you as a humble servant."

The lion thought, "Well ! I can use his help while hunting."

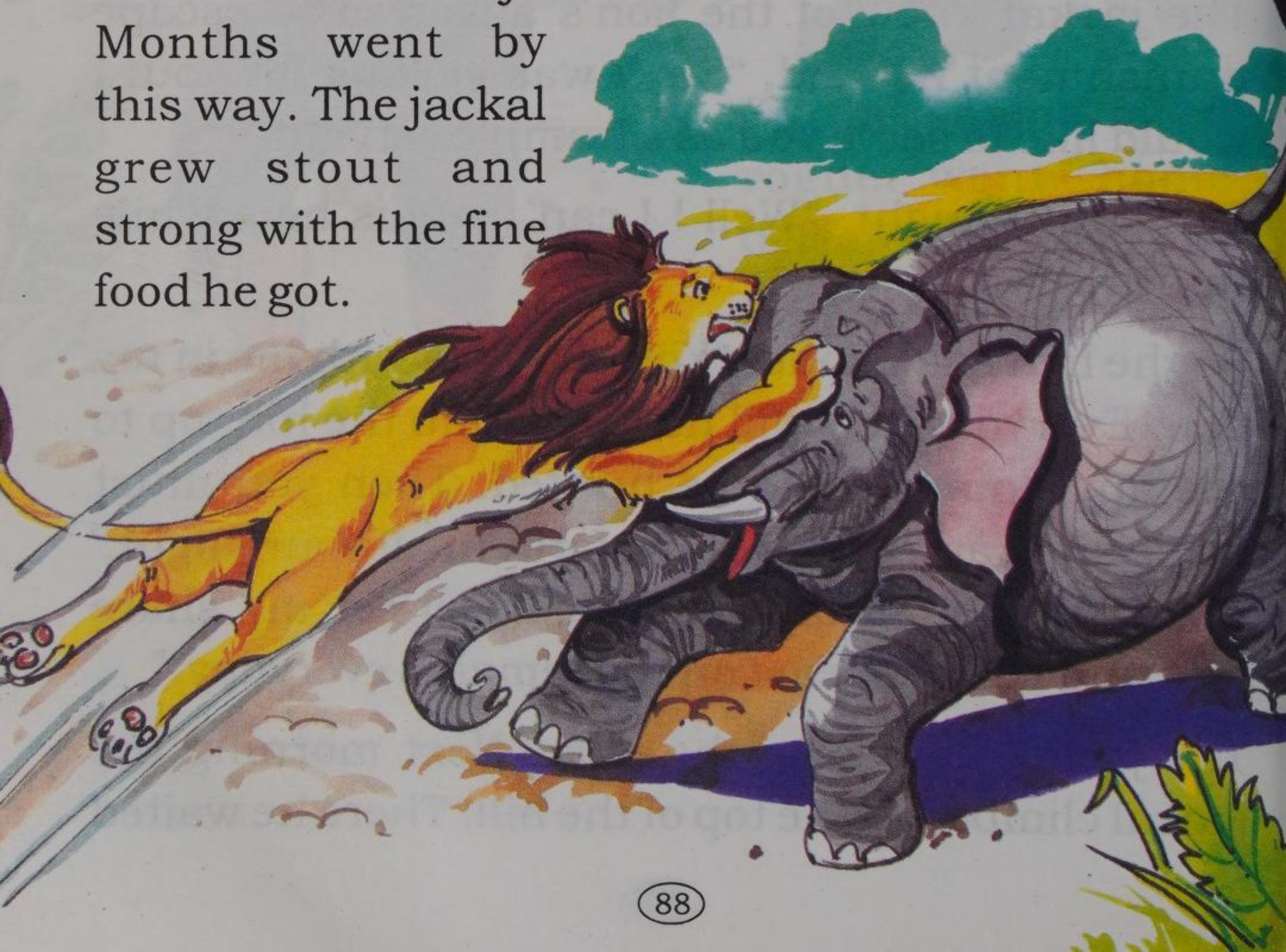
So the lion said aloud, "You can stay with me in my den. Everyday you will have to climb the hill top to see any animal fit to be hunted. Then you must come and say, 'Please shine forth in all your might.' Then I'll go and kill the animal. I'll eat my share first and you can feast on the remains everyday."

The jackal agreed to the offer. Next morning the jackal climbed to the top of the hill. There he waited

for some time and soon he saw an elephant coming down a path. He rushed downhill and reached the lion's den. There he said, "Sir, I saw an elephant from the hill top. Please shine forth in all your might."

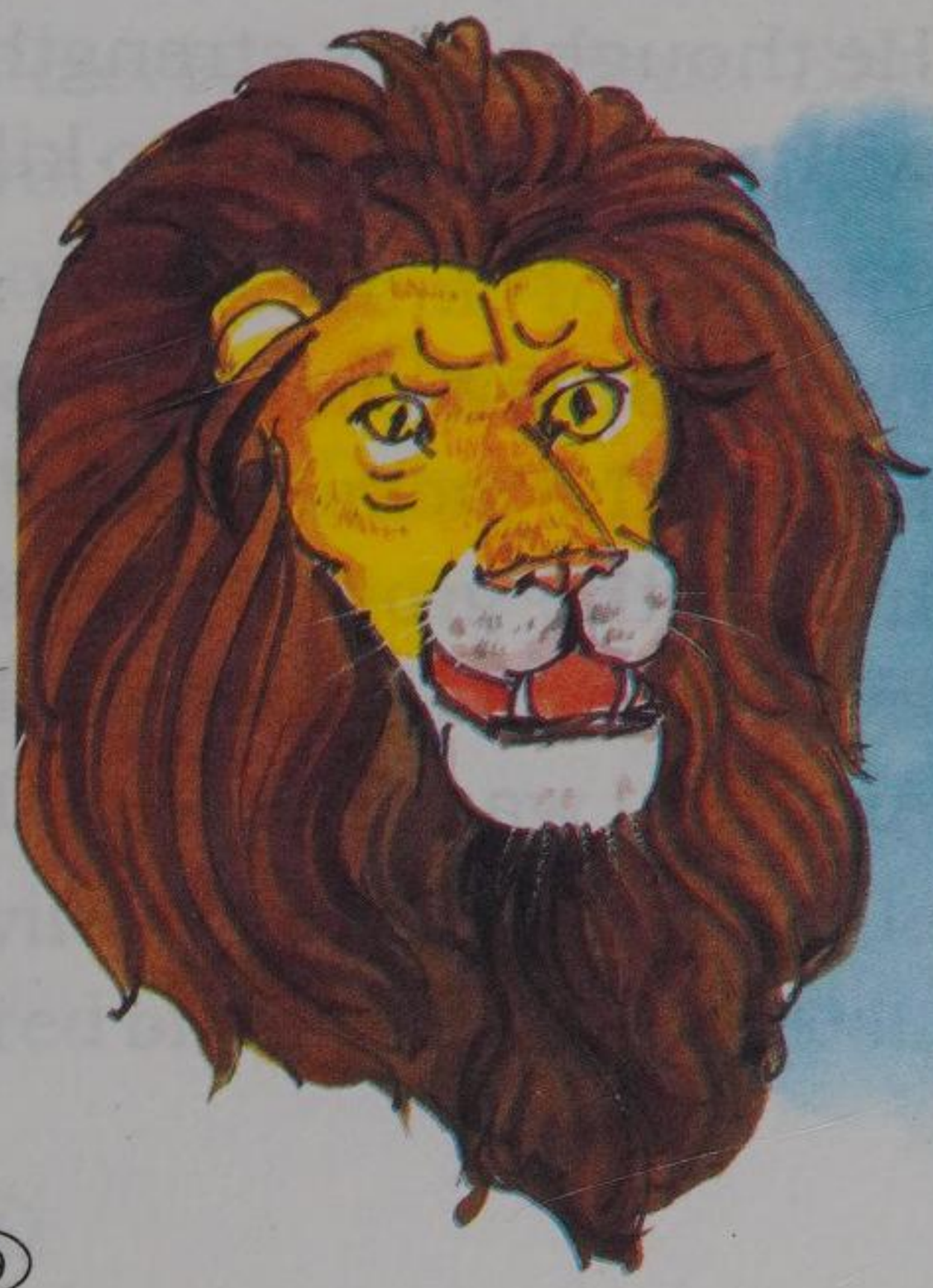
The lion smiled and got up. Then he went where the elephant was. He pounced on the elephant and killed the huge beast in a minute. Then he ate to his fill and left the rest for the jackal to feed on. The jackal was more than pleased to get such a large share of food. He thought, "This is a great life. I'll get food for free. I don't need to look and hunt for myself."

Thus, this went on everyday. The jackal would inform the lion about some prey, the lion would kill and eat and the jackal would taste the remains. Months went by this way. The jackal grew stout and strong with the fine food he got.



One day as the jackal was resting after a feasty meal, he thought, "I am now strong enough and even more cleverer than the lion. Why must I lead a life feeding on the remains of his hunt that he offers ? I think I can very well get my prey and eat the animal all by myself."

With these thoughts, the jackal went to the lion and told him what he felt. The lion grew thoughtful, "He is being foolish but he won't understand if I tell him that it is not so easy."

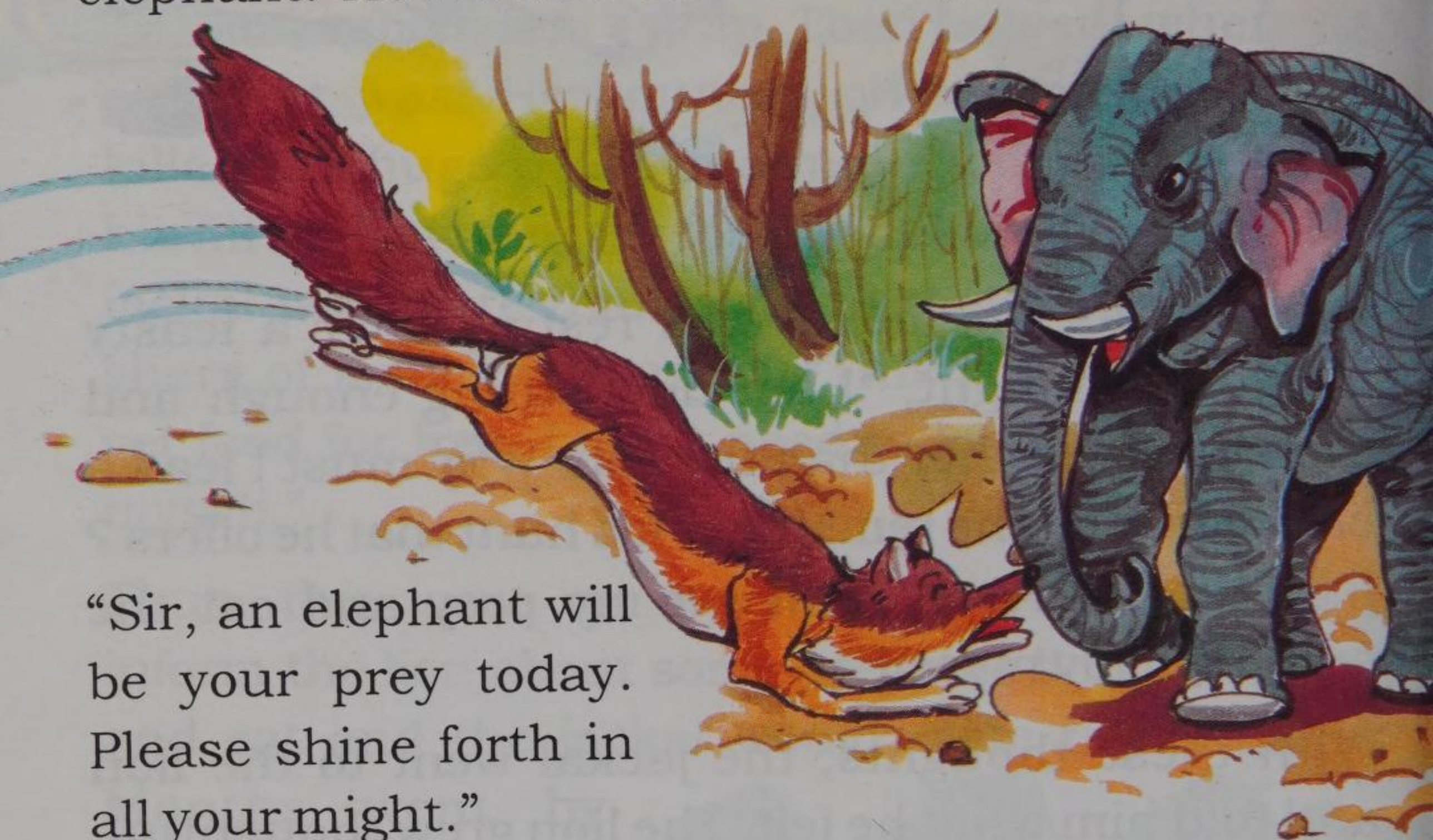


So aloud the lion said, "Why do you want to work so hard when I am feeding you for free ? Just relax and enjoy your life."

But the jackal insisted, "I wanted to try for myself for I knew that I

can catch a prey for my lunch."

The jackal kept insisting and the lion had to give the chance to the jackal, so they changed positions. The lion went to the hill top. He saw an elephant. He rushed back to the jackal and said,



"Sir, an elephant will be your prey today. Please shine forth in all your might."

The jackal got up with a proud, smile and went off. He thought, "My strength and those magical words will prove my ability to kill the elephant."

The jackal climbed up a rock and jumped down on the elephant that was passing by. As luck would have it the jackal missed and fell on the ground. As he hit the ground the elephant was startled. He trampled on the poor jackal crushing him to death. And that was the end of the foolish jackal.

The She-goat's Escorts

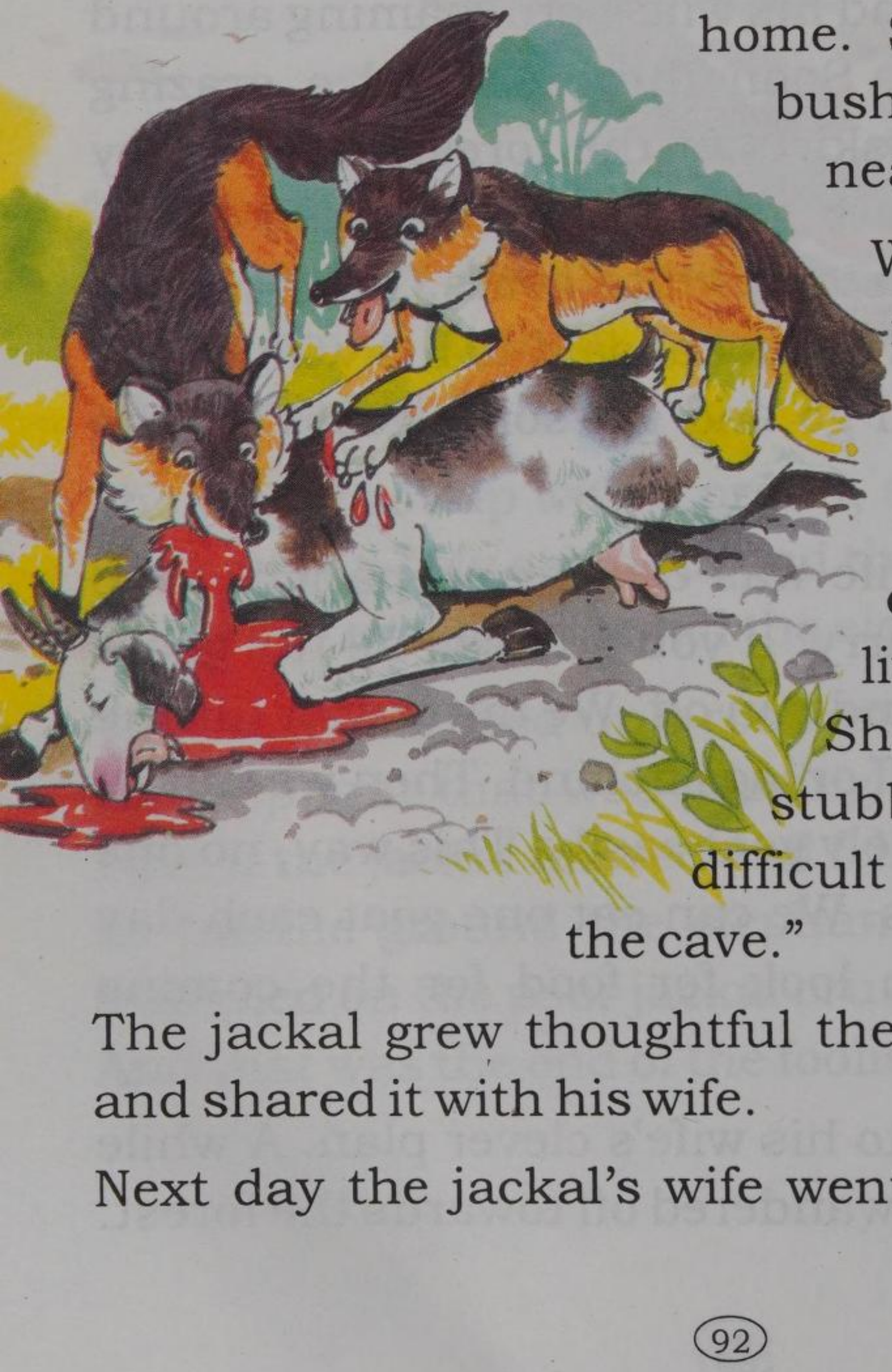
One day a jackal and his wife were roaming around in search of food. Soon they reached a grazing ground at the outskirts of the forest. There they saw a herd of goats grazing on the fresh green grass. Seeing the stout white goats, their mouth started watering. The jackal said to his wife, "Just wait here, dear. I'll go and get some goats for the lunch."

But the jackal's wife was clever and patient. She said, "No, don't hurry. If you go now, all the goats will become alert and run off. We must wait till one of them wanders off or lags behind. Then we can go and attack that lovely goat easily. This way, no one will know about us. We can eat one goat each day and won't have to look for food for the coming days."

The jackal agreed to his wife's clever plan. A while later, a young goat wandered off towards the forest.

The jackal pounced on him and killed him. Then the jackal and his wife dragged the dead goat to their cave and enjoyed their meal at leisure.

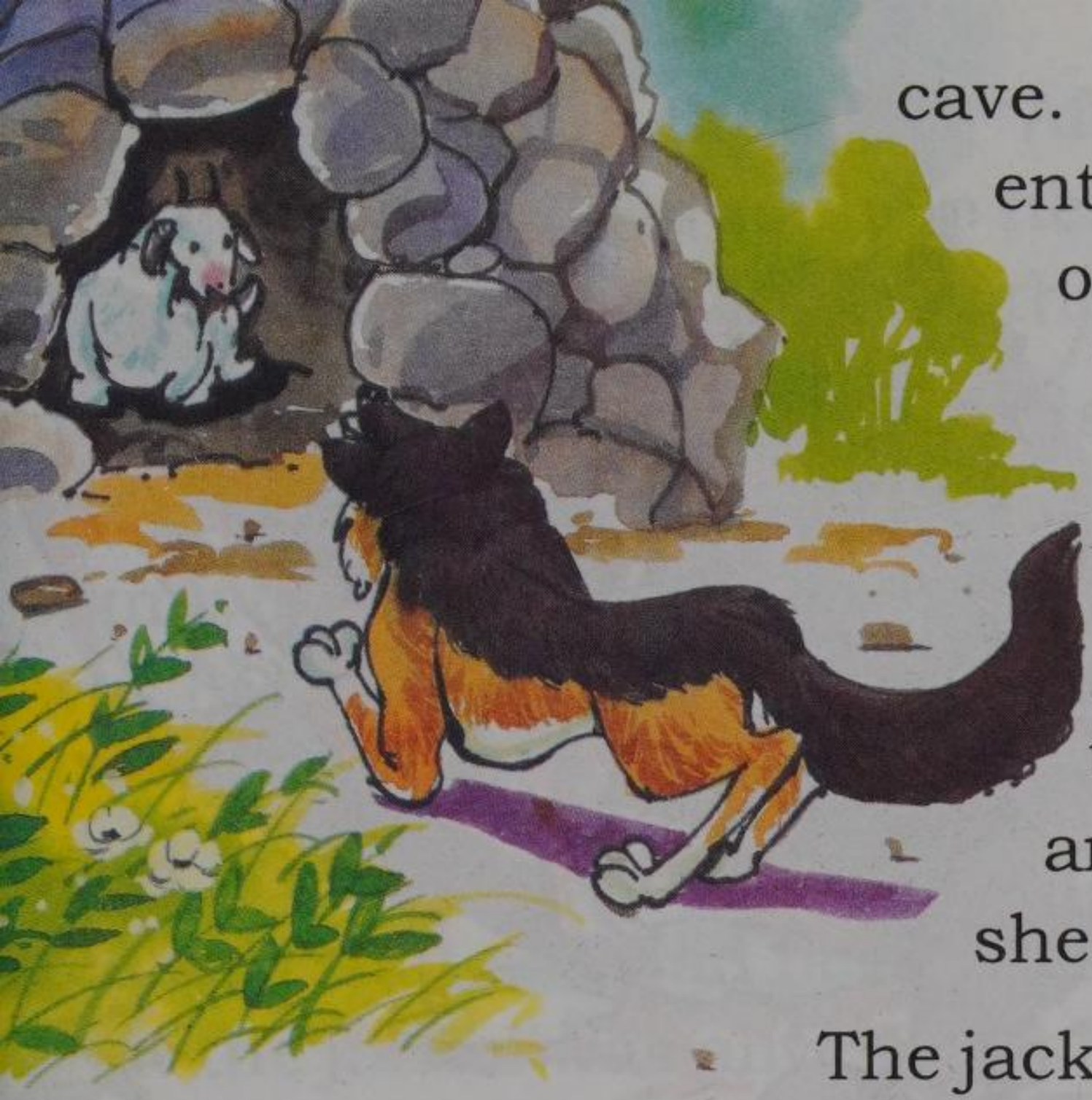
From that day onwards, the jackal and his wife caught a goat everyday and ate it up. Gradually, the number of goats started decreasing. At last there was only one she-goat left. She was very clever. She had realized that her companions and relatives had been killed by the jackal and his wife. So she stopped going out to graze. She remained in the small cave, which was her home. She ate from the bushes that grew just near the cave.



When there were no more goats left for the jackal to kill, his wife said, "I know a she-goat of the herd is still living in her cave. She is clever and stubborn. It will be difficult to get her out of the cave."

The jackal grew thoughtful then he made a plan and shared it with his wife.

Next day the jackal's wife went to the she-goat's



cave. She sat at the entrance and called out to the she-goat, "Sister, are you at home?"

The she-goat realized that it was the jackal's wife and wondered why she was there.

The jackal's wife continued, "Don't fear me. I am here to befriend you. I have no friends to share my joys and sorrows."

The she-goat said, "You deserve to being friendless. You are not trustworthy. You killed my loved ones. Go away from here."

The jackal's wife sadly said, "Ah ! I know why you say so. You don't trust me because of my husband's evil ways. It was he who killed your companions. I had nothing to do with it. When I feel angry or sad at his evil acts, I don't have anybody with whom I can share my feelings. Please speak

to me atleast."

The kind-hearted she-goat thought, "I can atleast share her thoughts even if I do not go out of the cave. I see no harm in speaking to her."

Soon the she-goat and the jackal's wife started conversing. And they became friends. For many weeks they met everyday and talked with each other. But the cautious she-goat did not come out of the cave. Soon the jackal's wife had won over the she-goat's trust.

One morning the jackal's wife came to the she-goat's cave in tears. She said, "Oh, my friend, what do I do now ? My evil husband died last night. No animal is coming forward to help me bury him. He will not rest in peace after death."

"No, I cannot help you," the she-goat said. "He was an evil jackal and a murderer. I will not go for him."

"But he is dead. He cannot harm you," the jackal's wife sobbed.

But the cautious she-goat did not give in. The jackal's wife kept crying and talking for an hour or

so. The she-goat thought, "After all, she is my innocent friend. I must help her. The evil jackal is dead as she says, so I have nothing to fear."

So the she-goat went with the jackal's wife. As she neared the cave where the jackal lived, she saw him lying dead on the ground. Actually the jackal was pretending to be dead so he opened one eye to see his plump prey, the white she-goat. But the alert she-goat saw him opening his eye. She realized that she had been tricked into a trap and that the jackal was alive. The she-goat at once ran back to her safe cave.

The jackal's wife became very angry at her husband. She shouted at him, "Couldn't you be patient ? You ruined everything. You were going to pounce on her when she came near enough. But you wanted to see her before you ate her. I'll bring her back again but you must behave yourself now."

The jackal's wife rushed back to the she-goat's cave. At the entrance she called out and said, "Friend, are you in ?"

The she-goat knew that the jackal's wife wanted to lure her to death once again. She said, "Go away. I won't talk to you. You are not fit to be a friend. You lied to me that your husband was dead."

"No, dear," the jackal's wife said. "What occurred was a miracle. Just as your noble presence was felt near my husband's dead body, his soul came back to bring him the life again. Now my husband has asked you to have a lunch with him now. He wants to thank you for bringing him back to life. He also wants to apologize for killing your companions and relatives."

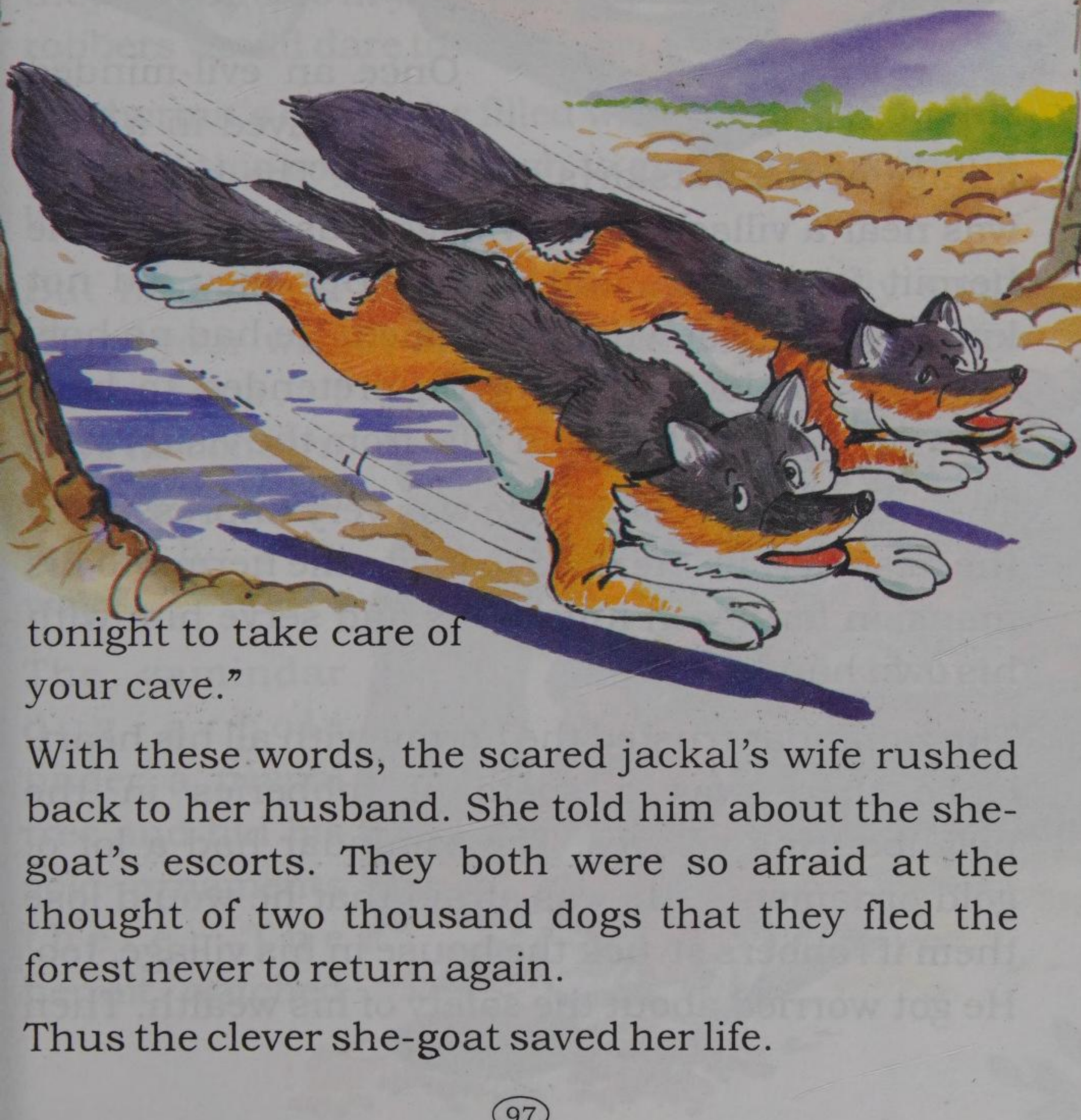
The clever she-goat said, "I'll accept the invitation as you are my friend. But you must rush back. I will come for dinner and not for lunch. You see, my two thousand escorts will also come for dinner at your

home. You will need time to cook food for them."

"Who are your two thousand escorts ?"the jackal's wife asked.

"Oh, they are dogs who are my friends from the city," the she-goat replied.

Hearing of two thousand dogs, the jackal's wife started sweating in fear. She said, "Oh ! I think you should stay home. I have heard that robbers are robbing unattended caves. You must stay at home

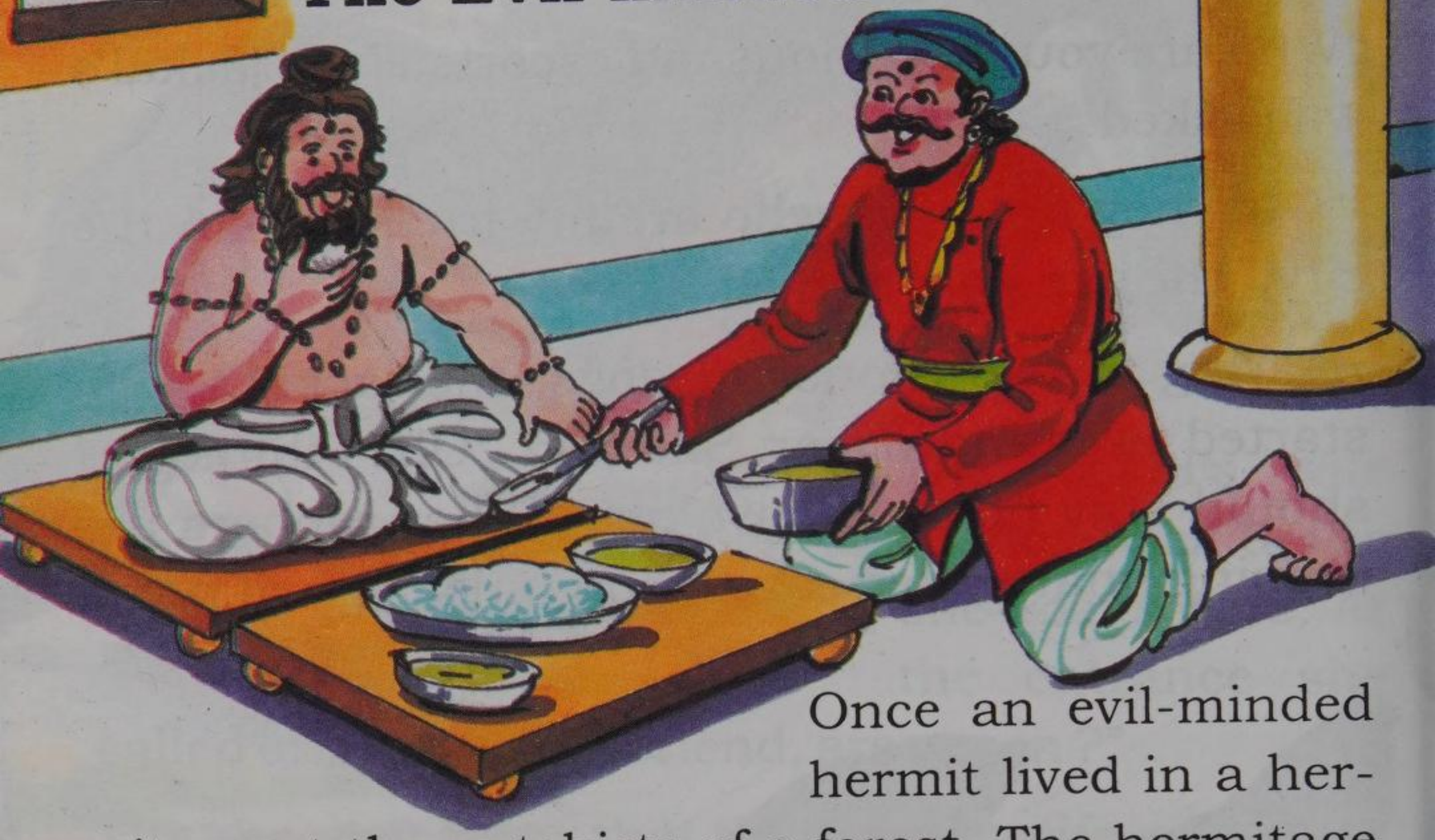


tonight to take care of your cave."

With these words, the scared jackal's wife rushed back to her husband. She told him about the she-goat's escorts. They both were so afraid at the thought of two thousand dogs that they fled the forest never to return again.

Thus the clever she-goat saved her life.

The Evil-minded Hermit



Once an evil-minded hermit lived in a hermitage at the outskirts of a forest. The hermitage was near a village. Many villagers used to visit the hermit for prayers and advice. But they did not know he was not what he seemed. He had no holy thoughts or love for God. He pretended to be a hermit to get free food and gifts from the visitors.

The zamindar of the village was very impressed by the false hermit. He used to invite the hermit to his mansion for lavish luncheons and serve him with his own hands.

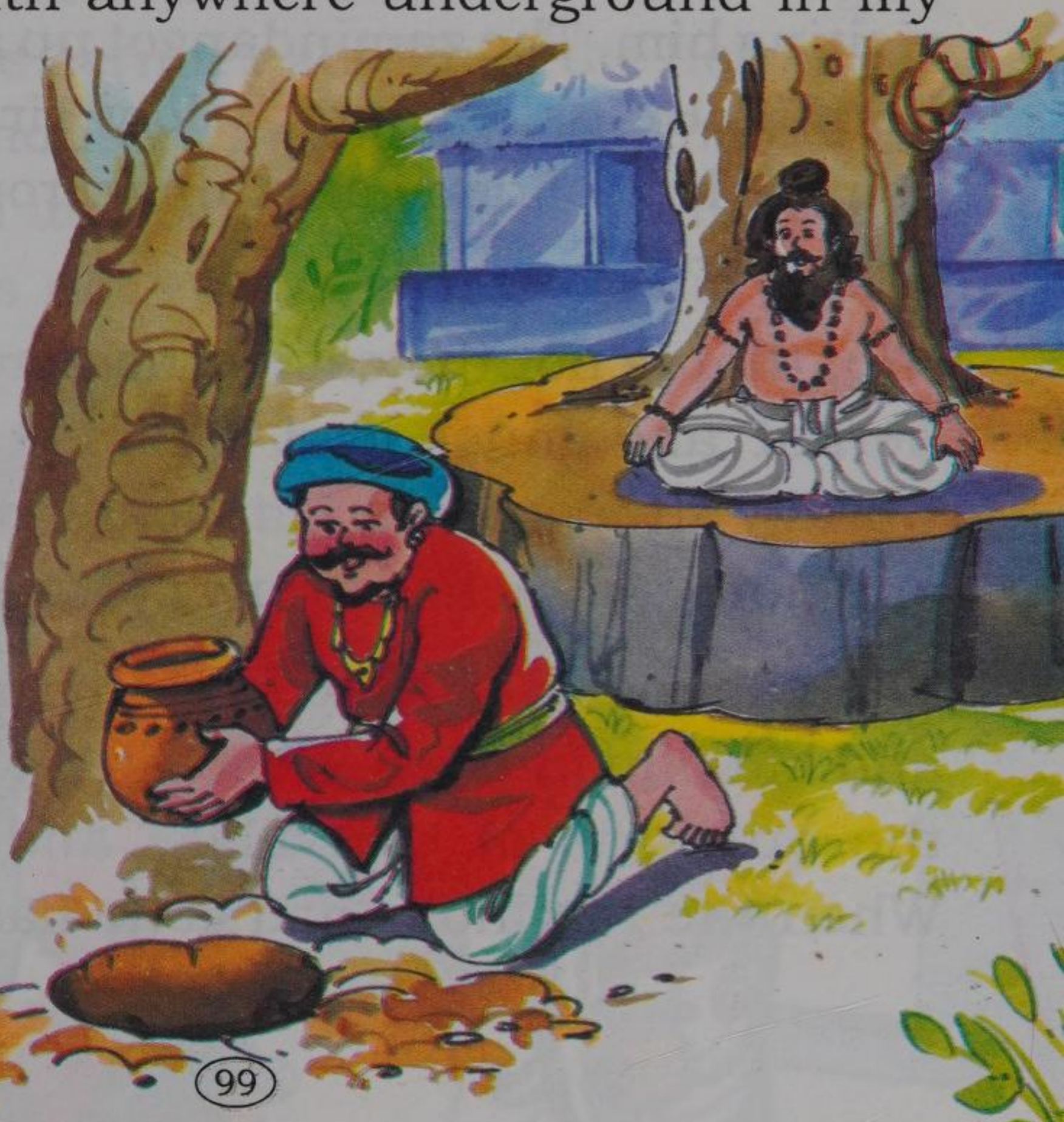
The zamindar trusted the hermit with all his heart. Once there was a spate of robberies in the neighbouring villages. The zamindar had a lot of gold ornaments. He was afraid that he would lose them if robbers struck the house in his village, too. He got worried about the safety of his wealth. Then

he thought, "I can hide all my wealth in the holy hermit's hermitage. The holy man is not concerned with worldly matters so he won't touch my wealth. And the robbers will never think of finding wealth in a hermitage so my gold ornaments will be safe."

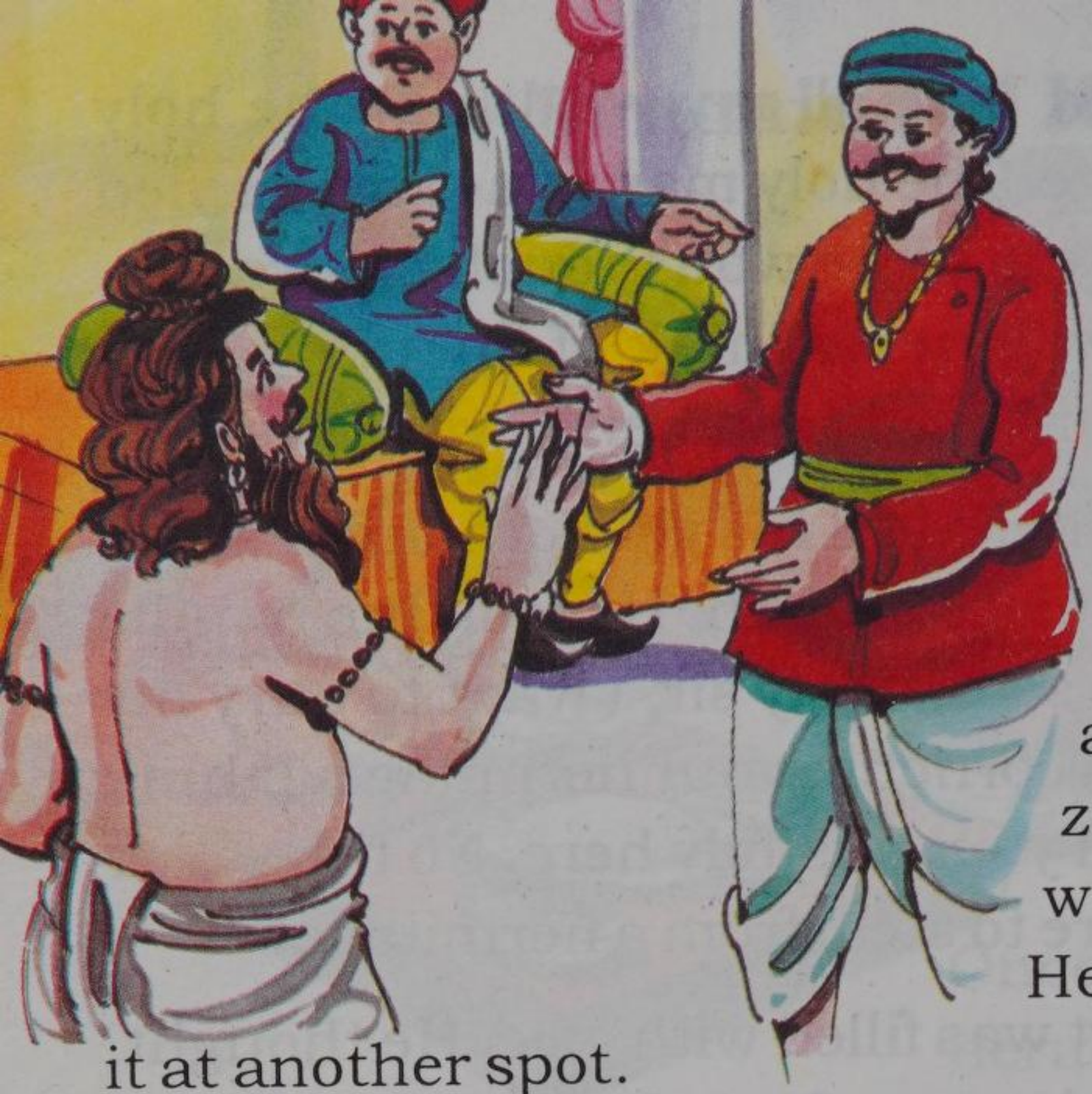
The zamindar gathered all his gold ornaments and tied them up in a piece of cloth. He took the bundle to the hermit and said, "Holy sir, I want to bury my life's earnings in a corner in your hermitage. I think they will be safe in your custody here. No thieves or robbers would dare to steal from a hermitage."

The hermit's heart was filled with glee. He thought, "Oh ! All this gold is enough to give me a luxurious life."

But he made a serious face and solemnly said, "Bury your wealth anywhere underground in my hermitage. I have no concern with gold and wealth any way."



The zamindar dug a hole under a peepal tree and hid his gold ornaments there. The hermit watched



all this. The zamindar thanked the hermit and went home. After his departure, the hermit got up and dug out the zamindar's wealthy bundle. He took and buried it at another spot.

Next morning he went to the zamindar's house and said, "I have come to bid you farewell."

The zamindar was talking to a merchant who was visiting him. The zamindar got up and bowed to the hermit. He asked him, "Holy sir, where are you going ? Have I done anything wrong to cause your departure ?"

"No, that is not the case," the hermit said. "I am a hermit and must lead a simple life away from worldly attachments. I must always be on the move and not get attached to any person or place."

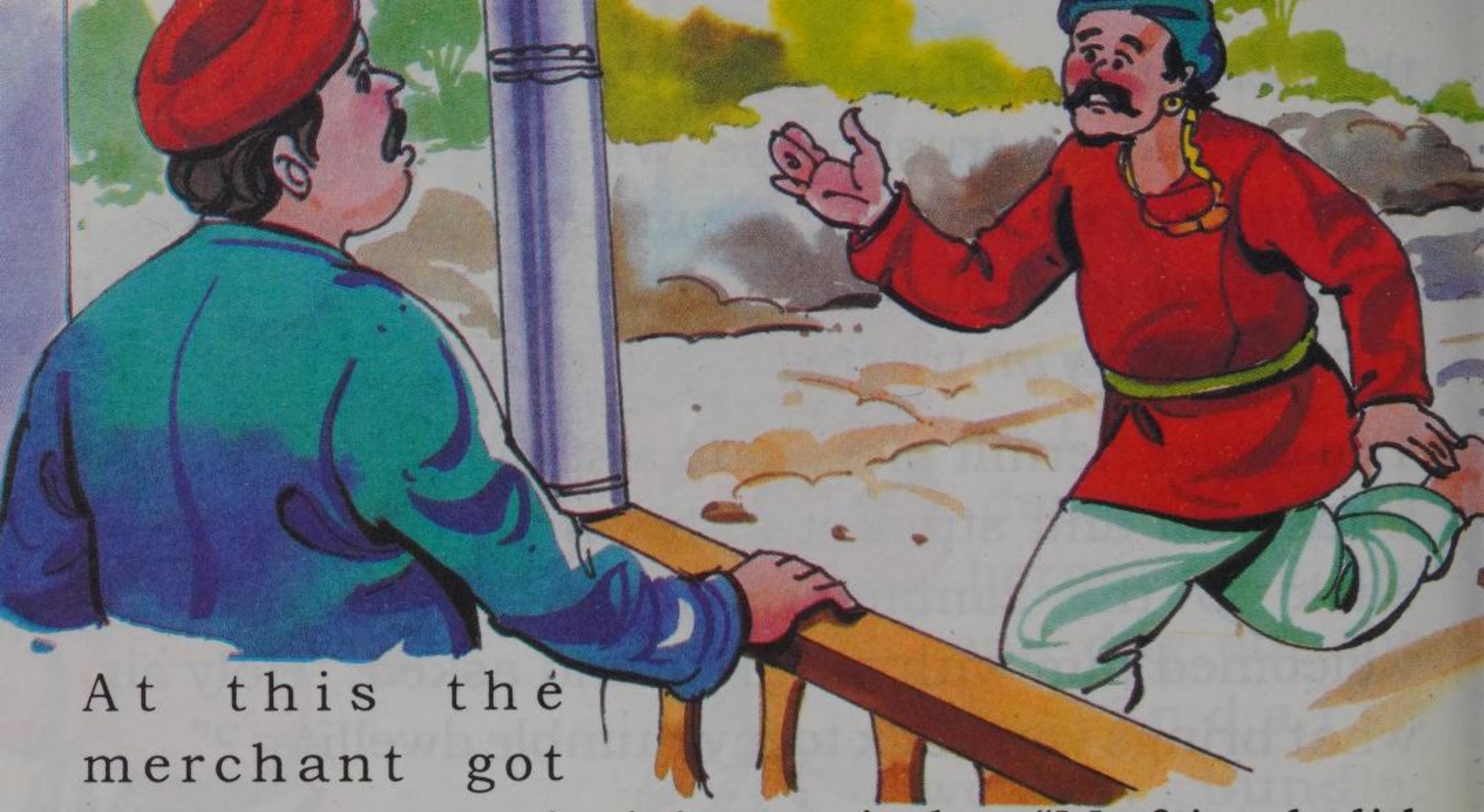
The zamindar accepted the hermit's explanation and bid him farewell. He walked with the hermit to the outskirts of the village and took his leave. When the zamindar had gone back to the village,

the hermit thought, "I must do something to keep the zamindar's trust in me. When he finds his gold ornaments are missing, he must not suspect me. I may need to deal with him in the far future so I must go away on trustworthy terms."

The clever hermit picked up a straw from a nearby hut's roof and stuck it in his hair. He then went back to the zamindar's house. The zamindar welcomed him with surprise and asked, "Holy sir, what brings you back to my humble dwelling ?"

Picking the straw from his hair, the hermit said, "A straw from your roof got stuck in my hair when I came here before. As a hermit, I cannot accept anything that is not gifted or is not mine by right. So I have come to return it."

The zamindar took the straw and was highly impressed by the hermit's act. Then the hermit left the zamindar's house. The zamindar turned to his merchant friend and said, "Oh ! Such a holy man he is ! He wants not even a straw to bind him to others. He is very learned indeed."



At this the merchant got suspicious. He asked the zamindar, "My friend, did you give anything to the hermit to keep safe ?"

"Yes, in fact, I hid all my gold ornaments in his hermitage," the zamindar quickly replied.

"Then you must go and check if it's still there."

The zamindar went to the hermitage. He dug under the peepal tree but could not see his bundle of gold ornaments. He rushed back to the merchant at his mansion and said weeping bitterly, "Oh my friend ! All my gold is gone !"

The merchant got up and said, "I thought so. My suspicious have come true. That hermit has stolen your gold. That thief must not have gone far. Let us run and catch him."

So the zamindar and the merchant ran and soon enough they saw the hermit outside the village. The merchant ran fast and caught the hermit. He

said, "You thief! At last I have caught you!"

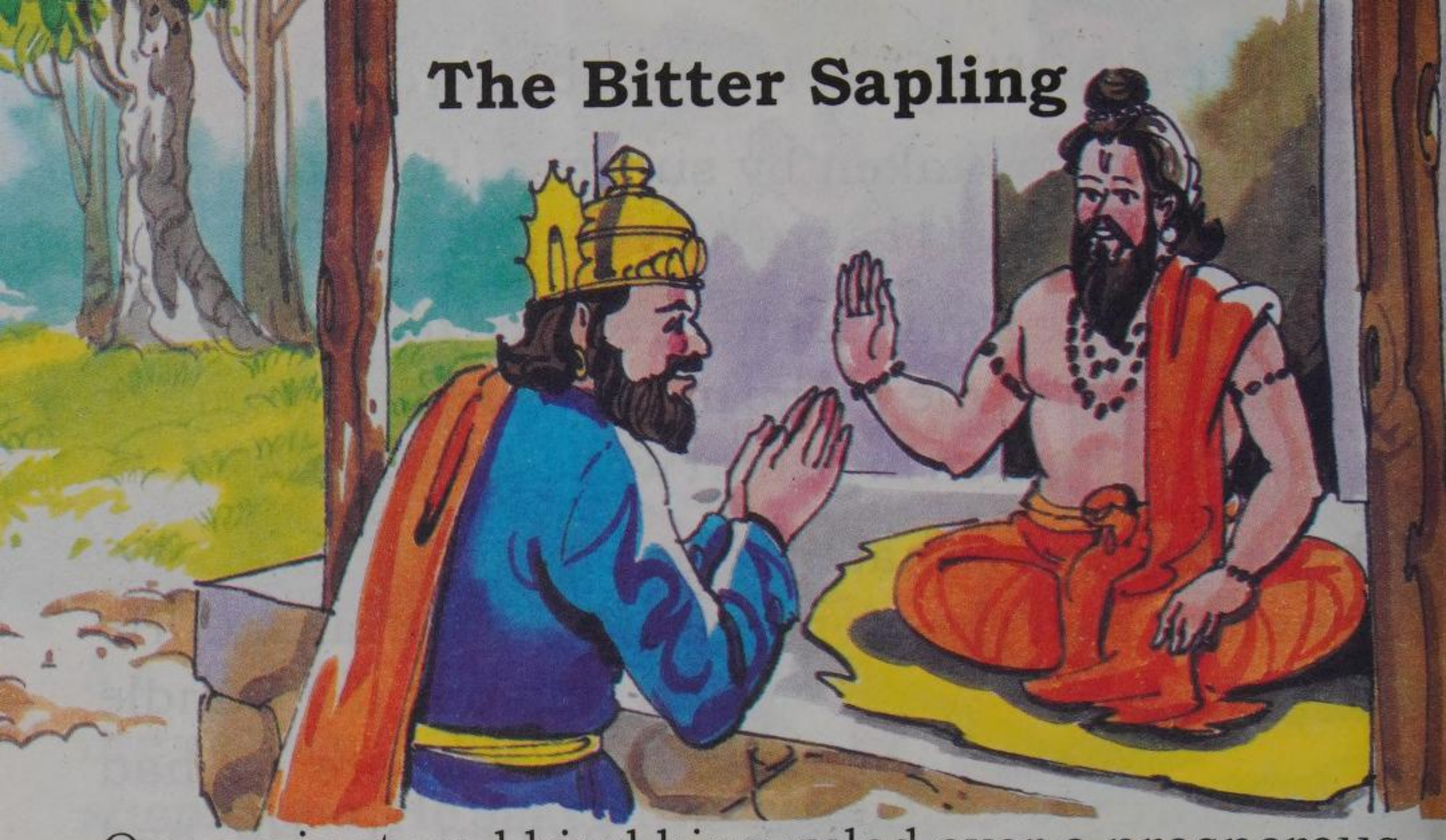
The hermit was taken by surprise. He blabbered, "Thief! What thief! I am a holy hermit ....."

Meanwhile the zamindar had reached there. He said, "You rogue! Tell me where my gold ornaments are or you will see heaven in a short while from now."

The hermit knew that his game was over. He led the zamindar and the merchant to the hermitage. He dug out the bundle from where he had hidden it. He had thought that he would come some time later and take the gold ornaments away but it was not to be.

The zamindar and the merchant hurled scoldings at the hermit's face. And the shame-faced hermit left the village forever.

The Bitter Sapling



Once a just and kind king ruled over a prosperous kingdom. His people were leading a comfortable life and had no complaints at all. Everyone praised their king. The kings of the neighbouring kingdoms also respected him. One would think that all this meant that the king was very happy. But that was not the case. The king used to worry a lot.

The reason for the king's worry was his son. The prince had been brought up with all luxuries, love and care. Being the only son, he had become a spoilt brat. He never obeyed his father and ill-treated the servants. He showed no interest in studies or political affairs either. The king was afraid that he would lose the respect which he had gained due to his unruly son.

One day the king went to a learned sage and told him the worry that bothered him day and night. The sage heard everything and got thoughtful.

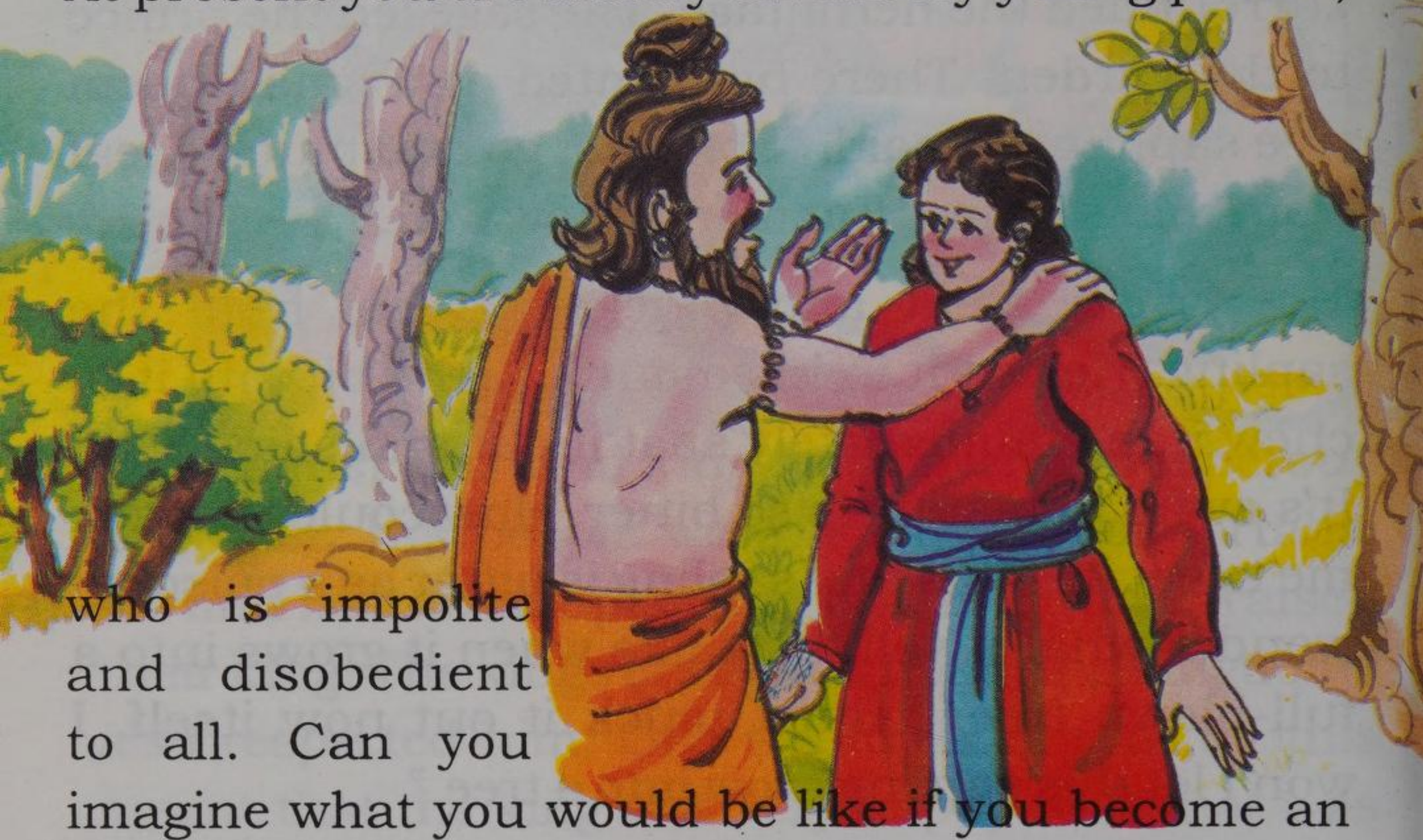
Then he said, "O king, I can help you. Just send your son to me for a while."

Next morning the prince arrived at the sage's hermitage. There was a large garden that surrounded the hermitage. The sage led the prince to the garden. There he pointed at a small neem tree sapling. He said, "Son, just go and pluck a leaf from that sapling. Eat it and chew well."

The prince went and plucked a leaf from the sapling. He put it in his mouth. As he bit into it to chew it, he immediately spat it out and said, "Oh ! It's awful to taste. It's so bitter. How could you ask me to eat it ? This tiny sapling is bitter as a poison. I wonder what it will taste like when it grows into a full-blown tree. I must pluck it out now itself. I won't let this sapling grow into a tree."

With these angry words, the prince bent down and plucked out the neem sapling. Then he crushed the bitter leaves into pulp.

The sage smiled at the prince's actions. Then he put his arm around the prince's shoulder and said, "Son, people and enemy kings will destroy you the same way as you have destroyed the bitter sapling. At present you are merely an unruly young prince, who is impolite and disobedient to all. Can you imagine what you would be like if you become an unruly king ? You will spell doom for your kingdom and people."



The prince realized his folly. He thought for a while. Then he respectfully bowed before the sage and said, "O holy sage, I thank you for making me realize my mistakes. I will give up all my bad habits. Now I will work hard and take interest in the kingdom's welfare like my father. I will now prove myself a good son, a respectful prince and a good king in the future."

Thus a tiny bitter sapling taught the lesson of good living to a prince.

The Fruit Tree

A fruit tree with shiny yellow mango-like fruits grew by a roadside. Its branches were always heavily laden with ripe fruits. A group of villagers used to hide behind a huge boulder by the roadside and spend the day just watching the fruit tree.

One day one of the villagers asked the other, "Is there any good news yet ?"

The other villager said, "Hush ! Don't talk. A man is eating the fruit from the tree."

A third villager peeped from behind the boulder and said, "He looks like a rich man to me. It seems to me that we will have a good day today."

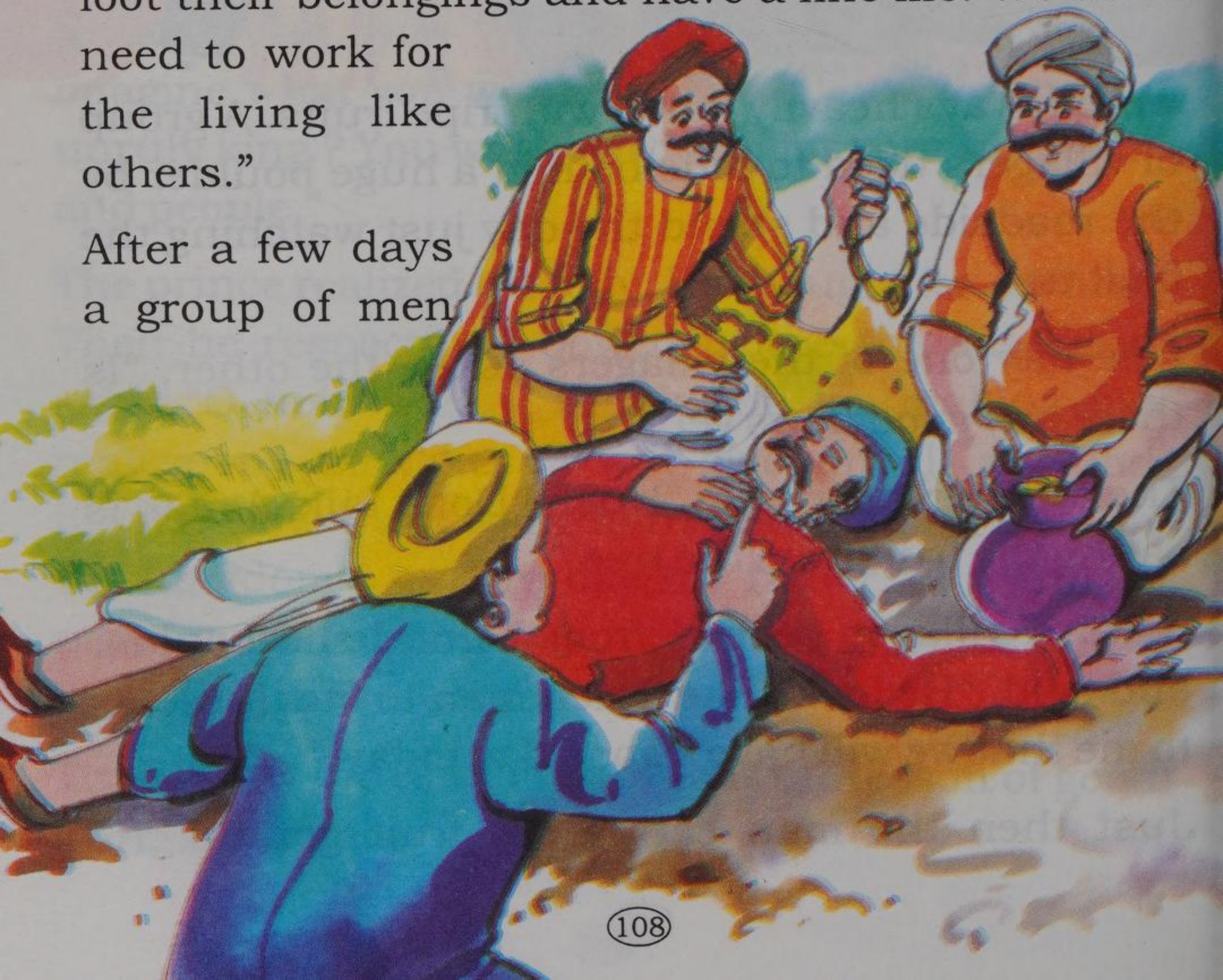
Just then the man eating the fruit got up. He

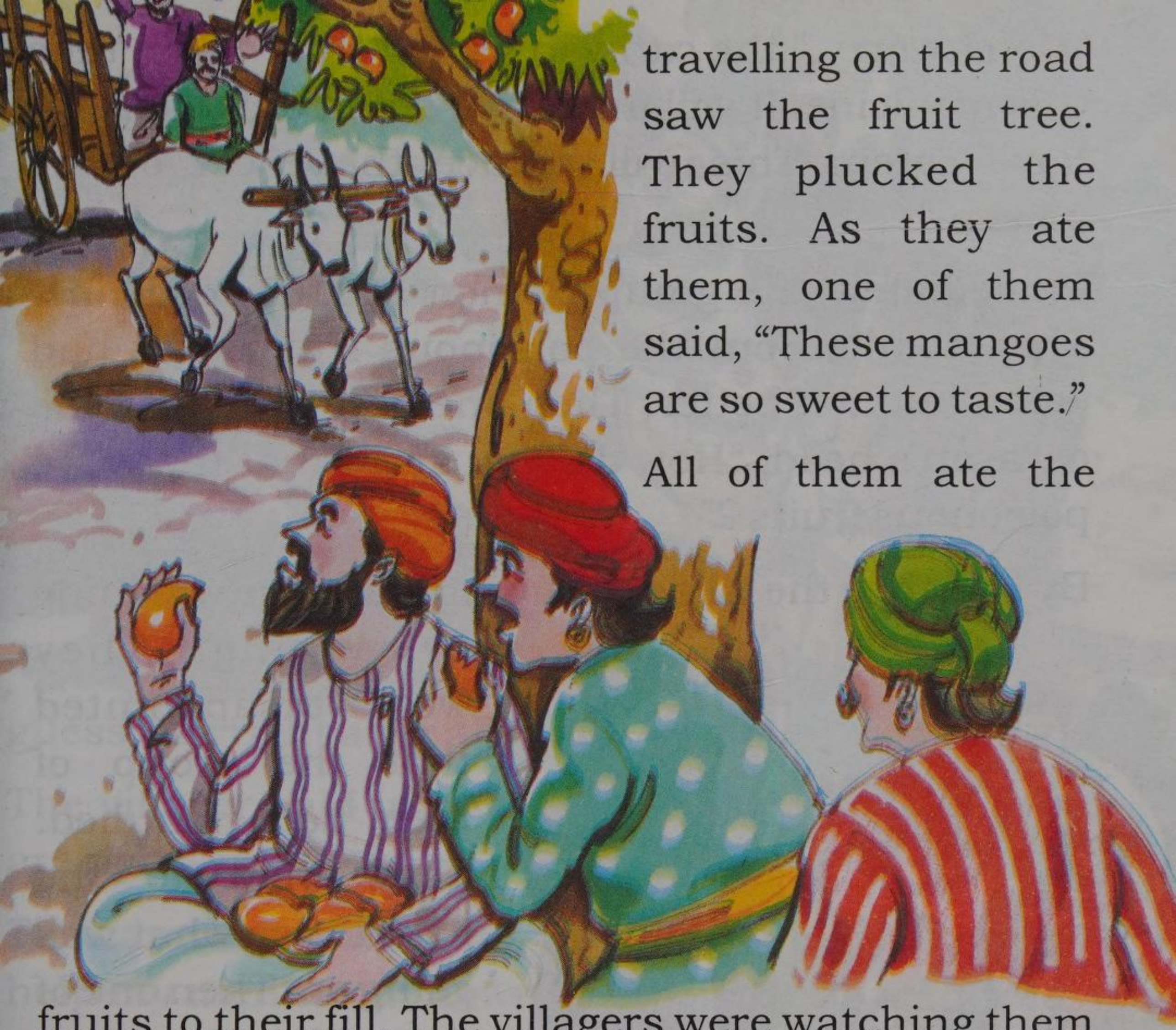
picked his bag and started walking away. The villagers followed him from afar. A while later the man had severe stomach ache. Soon he fell down on the ground.

The villagers who were following him rushed to the man. One of the villagers said, "So the poison has worked its magic. He is dead. Let's see what his bag has for us."

They opened the dead man's bag and took gold ornaments, money and silk clothes from it and took them home. On the way, one of them said, "That fruit tree by the roadside is very lucky for us. Travellers stop to eat the fruits thinking them to be mangoes but the poisonous fruits kill them. We loot their belongings and have a fine life. We don't need to work for the living like others."

After a few days a group of men





travelling on the road saw the fruit tree. They plucked the fruits. As they ate them, one of them said, "These mangoes are so sweet to taste."

All of them ate the fruits to their fill. The villagers were watching them from afar as usual. They were eagerly awaiting for the men to fall down dead, so that they could get something for themselves. But just then a caravan came down the road. The head of the caravan sat in the first bullock-cart. He got down and ran to the men near the tree. He shouted, "Hey ! Stop at once. Don't eat these fruits. They are poisonous."

The group of men grew white with fright. One of them cried out, "Oh ! What do I do now ? I have already eaten the fruits. My friends here have done the same."

"Don't worry," the caravan's head said. "Here take this medicine. It will make you vomit out what you have eaten. This will reduce the effect of the poison."

Immediately the group of men ate the medicine. They vomited out the poisonous fruits they had eaten and felt better. Then one of them asked the caravan's head, "How did you know that these are poisonous fruits ?"

By this time the villagers hiding afar were watching

everything. They were disappointed that the group of men had not died. They went to the spot to see what was going on. Then one of the villagers asked the same question, "Yes, do tell us how you know about this poisonous fruit tree?"

The caravan's head said, "I pass down this road once every week. I have done so for many years. I observed this fruit-laden tree growing so near the village. But none of the villagers or children from the village ever pluck these fruits to eat. Thus I was sure that it must bear some poisonous fruits. My

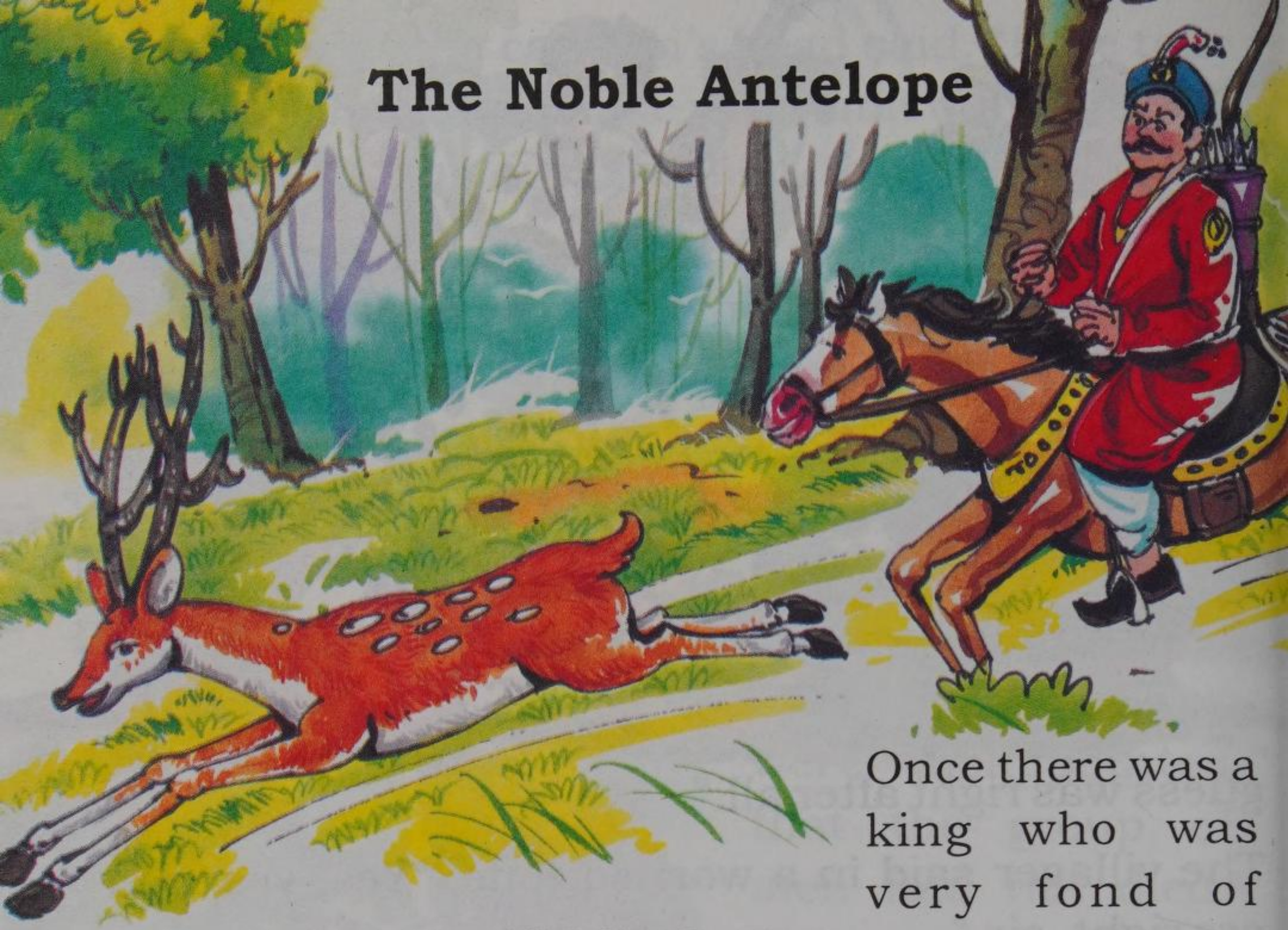
guess was right after all."

The villager said in a worried tone, "Yes, yes, you are right, sir."

The caravan's head said, "Now, you villagers must help my men to cut down this poisonous fruit tree or it will cause many more deaths."

The villagers could not refuse to help because if they did so, then they would be suspected of their ill doings. So the poor villagers had to help cut the tree. Their lucky tree was no more and they had to work hard like the others to earn a living.

The Noble Antelope



Once there was a king who was very fond of hunting. He spent many days going to forests on hunting trips. He was always accompanied by some guards, soldiers and important ministers.

Once he heard of a beautiful golden antelope that roamed in the forest near his kingdom. Many people had seen the antelope and praised its golden hue and beautiful eyes. But they said the antelope was too quick for them to catch. The king was determined to get the beautiful golden antelope so he set out for the forest with his hunting troupe.

They looked around the forest for a long time. Atlast the king saw the golden antelope in a grove. Immediately, the king aimed his arrow at the antelope but the alert antelope ran off. The king and his men were on horse back so they chased the

antelope as it ran. The king shot some more arrows but they did not reach anywhere near the antelope. The king now was sure that the people spoke true of the strong footed antelope. Then the determined king shot an arrow at the antelope's legs and missed. The king's next aimed arrow at the antelope's head just whizzed from between his antlers.

The constant running had tired the antelope. He sat down by a bush to rest but he saw that the king was near him. The king was now alone as he had followed the antelope into the deep forest. His men had been left behind. The antelope knew the king would catch him now. So he lay down on the ground and pretended to be dead. When the king was near and about to touch the antelope, the clever creature got up and ran off again. The king was startled yet decided to follow the antelope.

After a while the antelope heard a loud splash. The antelope stopped running to hear more. He heard no more sounds of the king following him, so it was sure that the king had fallen into some water-

hole. The antelope retraced his steps and true to his belief he saw that the king was drowning waist deep in a water-hole. On seeing no one around, who could help him, the king pleaded, "Oh ! golden antelope, please help me out of this water-hole."

The antelope was kind-hearted. He thought, "This king has been chasing to kill me. Now he is in trouble. But I cannot leave him in such a dangerous situation. I must help him."

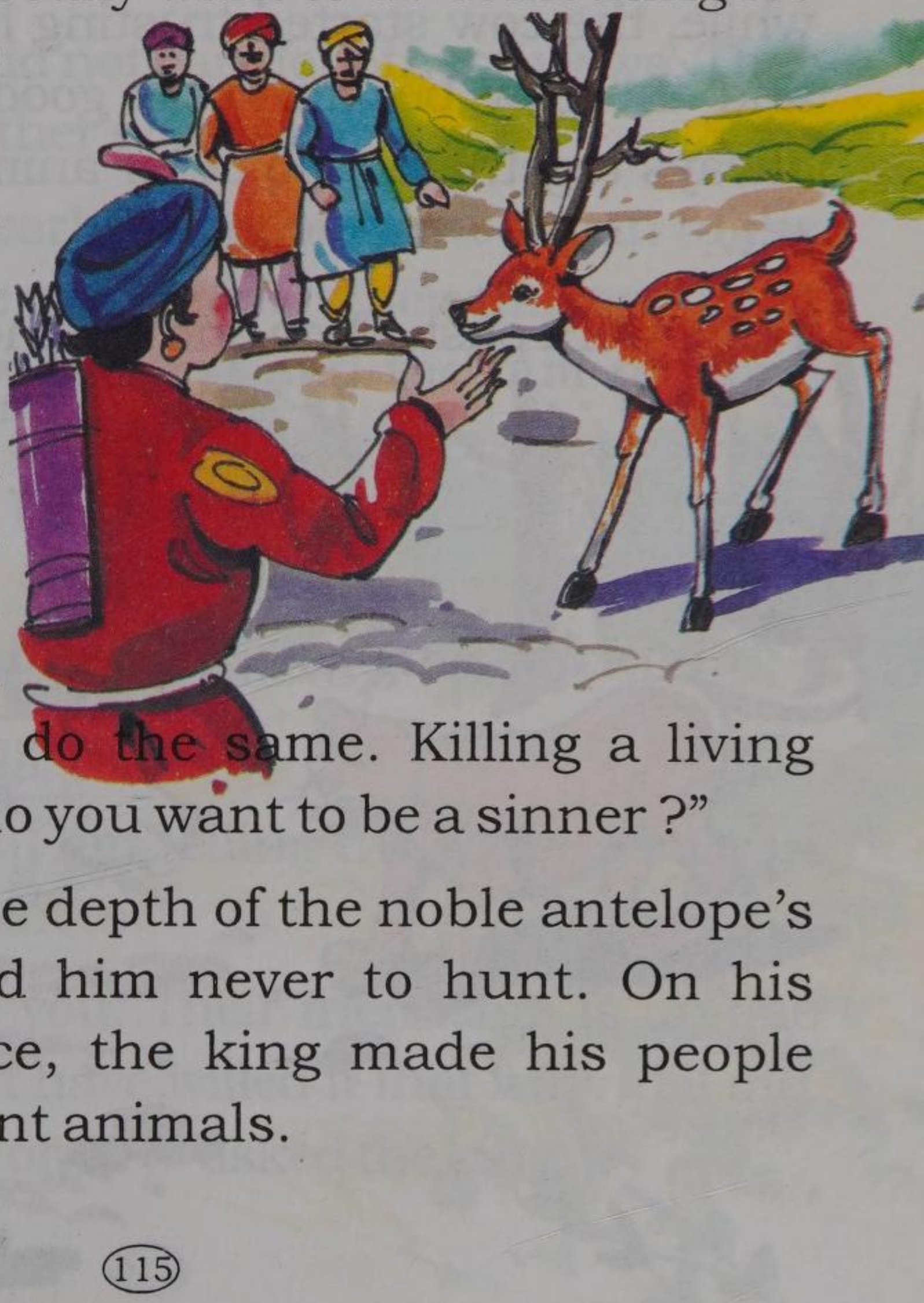
So the antelope went near the water-hole and said to the king, "I will surely help you sir. I am lowering my head. Just take hold of my antlers and get on to my back. You'll soon be out of the water-hole."

The king followed the antelope's instructions. When he was out of the water-hole, the king heaved a sigh of relief. The king looked at the antelope thankfully and said, "O golden antelope, thank you for saving my life. In spite of my intentions of killing you that you are aware of, you still helped me. As a reward I want to keep you in my palace where you'll be treated as a royal guest."

"No, sir," the golden antelope said, "I am not doing this for any reward. Even now I know you are lost in the forest and your men are not here to help you. Come, I'll take you out of the forest. I'll find your men for you."

The king followed the antelope and soon enough he met his men at the edge of the forest. Then the king insisted once more, "Please come with me to my palace."

But the antelope said, "Sir, I have no use of a luxurious palace life. I am a wild creature and the forest is my home. To me, even the palace would be like a prison. If you really want to do something for me, you must give me a promise."



"What promise must I give ?" the king enquired.

"Just stop hunting wild creatures. Let them live freely in peace. You must ask your people to do the same. Killing a living being is a sin. Why do you want to be a sinner ?"

The king realized the depth of the noble antelope's views and promised him never to hunt. On his return to the palace, the king made his people promise never to hunt animals.

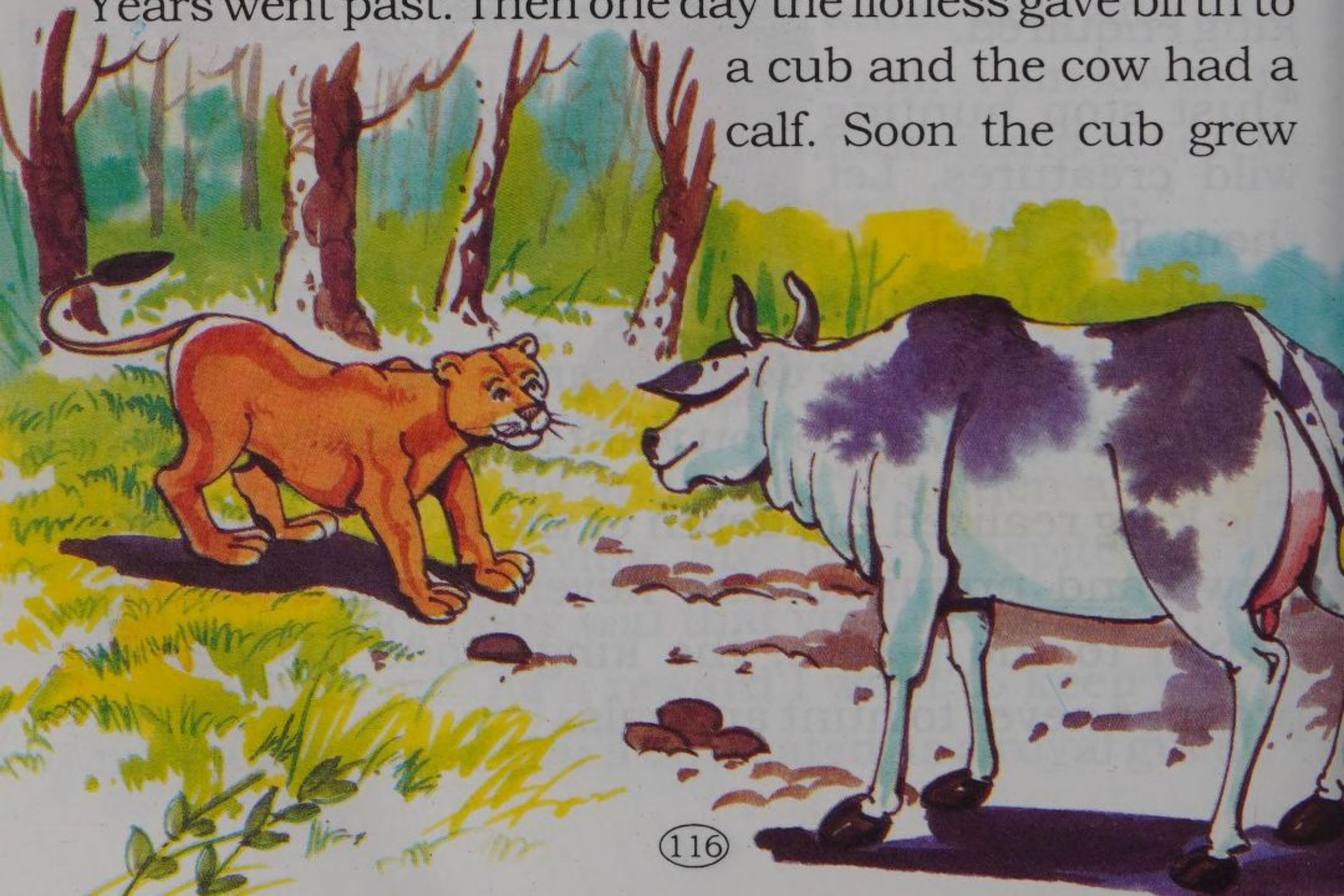
The Foolish Friends

One day a lioness was roaming in the forest. She saw a lonely cow wandering around. She had been left back by the cow herd as she had strayed away. Just then when the cow saw the lioness. She was very scared. She thought, "Oh, a lioness! She'll kill me if she sees me."

The lioness thought, "Poor cow, she is looking so scared. I have already had my lunch but she does not know about it. She fears I may kill and eat her. I must go and reassure her."

So the lioness went slowly to the cow. Then she talked to her gently and calmed down the cow's fears. After a while, the cow started trusting her. Soon the lioness and the cow became very good friends. They were always together so no other animal tried to harm the cow.

Years went past. Then one day the lioness gave birth to a cub and the cow had a calf. Soon the cub grew



up as a young lion and the calf grew up as a bull. Like their mothers, the young lion and the bull also grew up as close friends. The animals in the forest wondered how a lion and bull could be so friendly.

But the two friends did not care for others' views. They were happy in each other's company.

Once the king of a nearby kingdom sent a man to the forest to gather some rare herbs. When the man went in the forest, he saw the lion and the bull roaming around together. He could not believe his eyes. When he went back to the king with the herbs, he told the king, "Your Majesty, I saw a rare scene in the forest today. A lion and a bull are living together as friends."

"Is that true ?" the king asked.

"Yes, Your Majesty ! I am telling the truth. You can see yourself if you want to."

"No, no, I do believe you. Their friendship is unique indeed but God must have willed it that way. Tell me, do you visit the forest often ?" asked the king.

"Yes, Your Majesty ! I go there to gather some special types of herbs required by the vaidya," the man replied.

"Then you must keep a watch on the two friends. Inform me if any third animal becomes their friend, because their friendship is unique and rare. A third animal's intervention may affect their friendship."

A few days later, a cunning jackal became the friend of the bull and the lion. He wanted to taste the flesh of the lion and the bull, so he thought, "I must break their friendship so they do not protect each other. Now I must carry out my plan."

The jackal went to the lion and said, "You think you are strong and mighty and have a good friend, the bull to support you. But you are being foolish. The bull is merely waiting for a chance to get rid of you and take your place as the king of the forest. I respect you a lot so as a good friend. I am just warning you."

The lion was surprised when he heard the jackal's words but he did not say anything at that moment.

After meeting the lion,

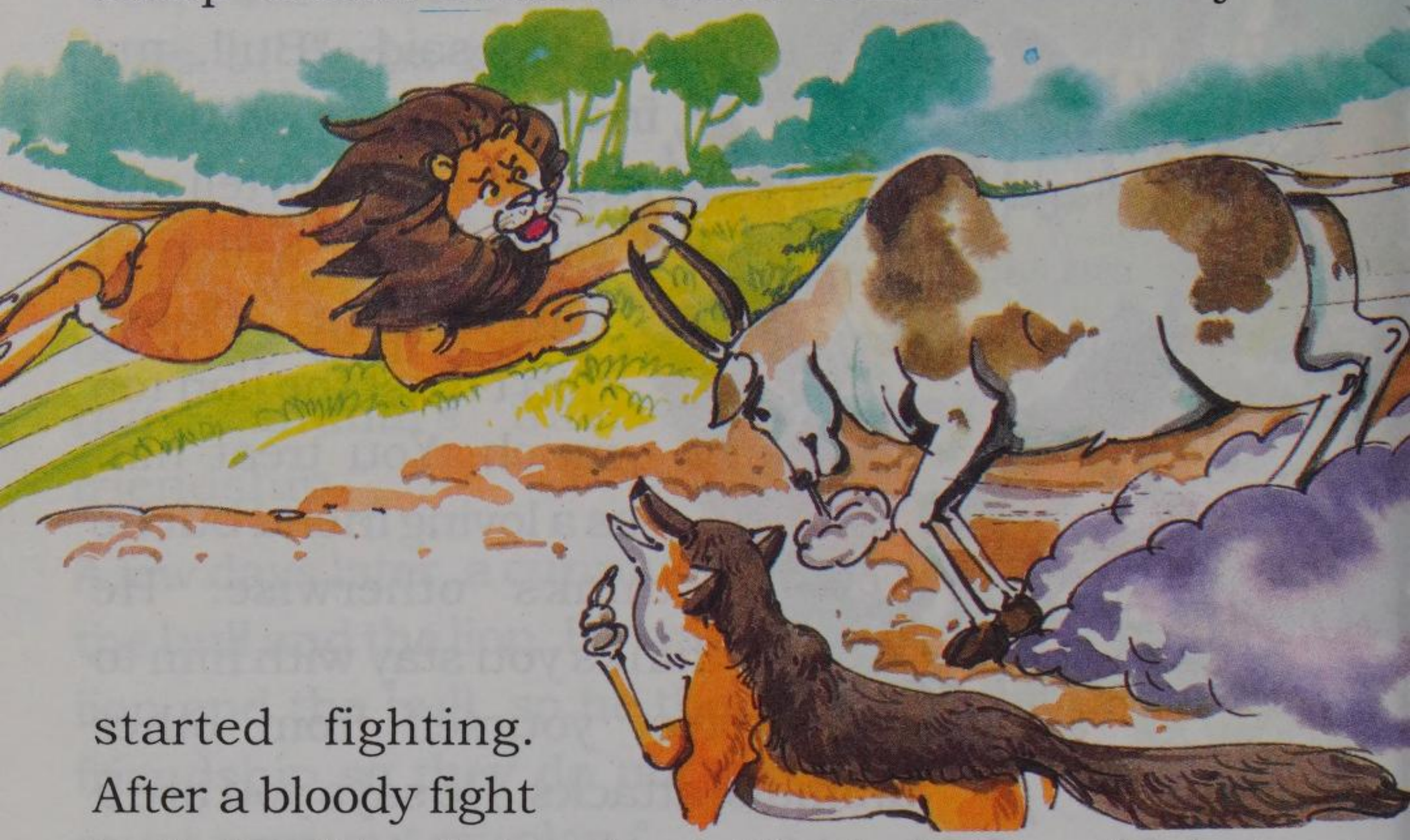
the jackal went to meet the bull. He said, "Bull, my friend, I love you so much. I want to tell you something which I have learnt. Please don't trust the lion too much. You treat him as a loving friend but he thinks otherwise. He thinks you stay with him to protect yourself from other animals' attacks. He says you are a coward. I heard this with a sad heart. I am telling you all this to warn you."

The bull was a short-tempered animal so he took some time to control his anger.

The next day the man went again to get some herbs from the forest. When he saw a jackal with the lion and the bull, he rushed back and informed the king. The king said, "Oh, that's a bad news. I think their friendship is in danger. Let us go to the forest and see what happens."

Meanwhile the lion and the bull had been provoked by the jackal once again. The foolish friends believed the jackal's words and could not control their anger. The lion rushed at the bull with a loud roar while the bull lowered his head and approached the lion with his

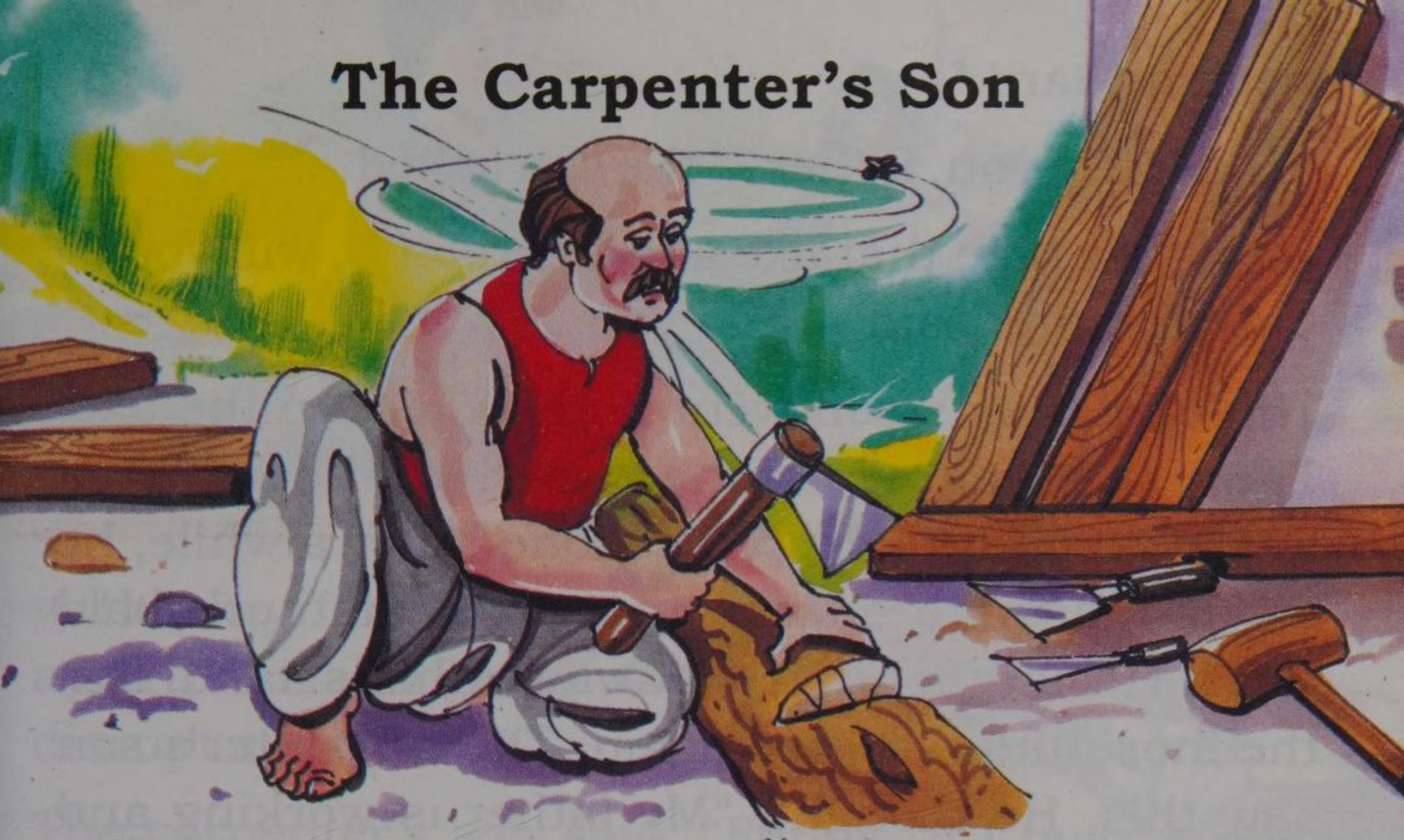
sharp horns. Both of them collided forcefully and started fighting. After a bloody fight both the friends lay dead. The jackal laughed aloud and said, "You fools, you did not have faith in your life-long friendship. I used only my brain to cause your deaths. I'll feast on your flesh for weeks now."



The king could do nothing to protect the lion and the bull. When he reached at the spot with the man, everything was over. Both the foolish friends had died. The jackal had been enjoying their flesh. The king saw the scene and said, "So what I had expected has happened at last. People are right when they say that two is company, three is a crowd and believing without confirming always brings doom."

The king and the man left the forest with a heavy heart.

The Carpenter's Son



A hard-working carpenter lived in a village. He loved to work and also loved songs. Many a times as he used to work, he used to sing out loud.

One day, on a sunny afternoon, he was busy cutting a log. He was bald so his head was shining in the sun. A mosquito was buzzing around where the carpenter was working. Soon he settled on his bald head. The carpenter buzzed him away with his hand and went back to work.

The carpenter was cutting a log with his axe. After a while he kept the axe aside and picked up the saw. The carpenter then started singing a song as he cut the log with the saw.

A little while later the carpenter's son came to him. He said, "Father, you look very happy today. What is the matter ?"

"Son, I am always happy so I always sing. I like

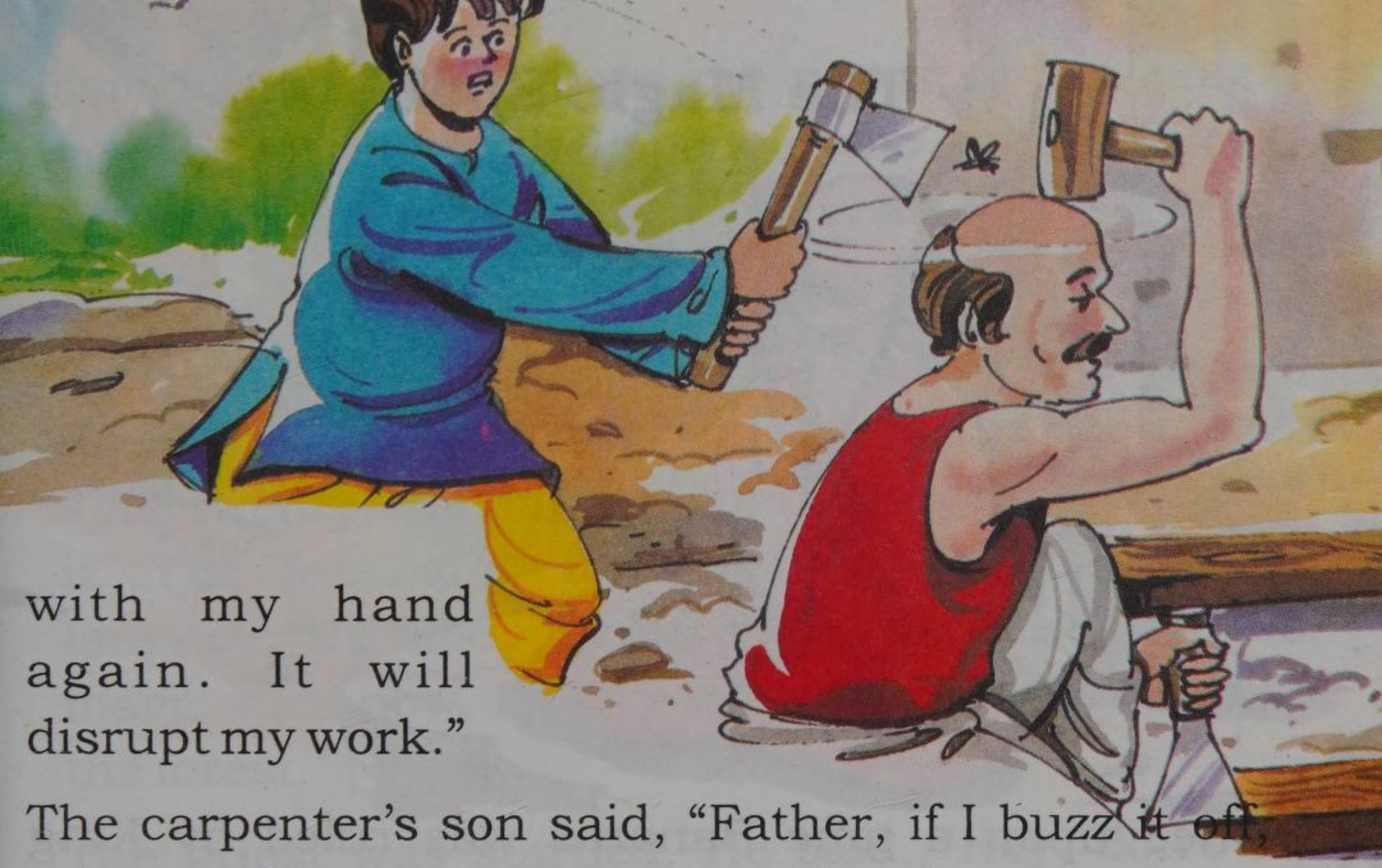
working hard."

"Can I help you, father ?" the son asked.

"Yes, just take that axe and sharpen it, will you ?" the carpenter said.

The carpenter's son went and picked up the axe. Then wetting a stone nearby, he started sharpening the axe on the stone. After a while, he saw a mosquito buzzing around his father's bald head. His father buzzed it away with his hand. But the mosquito returned again. The carpenter's son saw this. He thought, "My father is working and this silly mosquito is troubling him again and again."

Just then the carpenter said, "Son, there is a mosquito some where around my head. It keeps coming and settles on my head. Will you flick it away ? I can't keep buzzing it off



with my hand again. It will disrupt my work."

The carpenter's son said, "Father, if I buzz it off, this troublesome mosquito will return again to trouble you. I think I'll teach him a tough lesson."

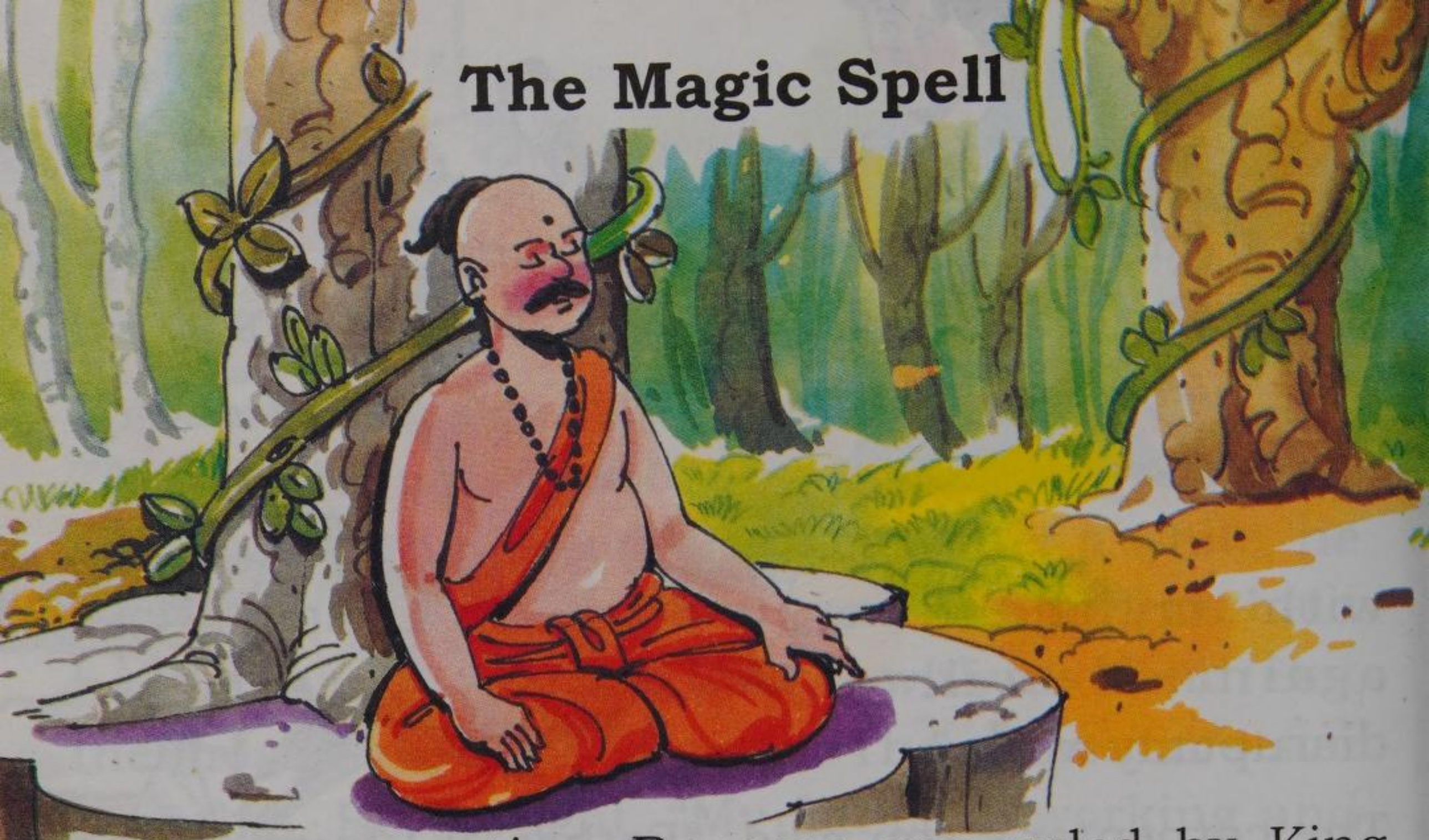
Saying so, the carpenter's son picked up the axe he had sharpened. He thought, "Wait, you mosquito, I'll kill you for once."

So the boy picked his axe high up in the air and struck at the mosquito buzzing over his father's head. But the quick mosquito flew off. The axe's blow fell on the carpenter's bald head and the poor man died there and then.

"Oh ! father, what have I done !" the carpenter's son cried out.

Then he started crying and felt angry at himself for acting foolishly without thinking.

The Magic Spell



Once upon a time Banaras was ruled by King Brahmadatta. He was a kind and generous king. The people in his kingdom were well-looked after. They had plenty to eat and a fine life-style.

The royal priest of Banaras was a learned man. He knew all that the holy books contained and even knew all about the rites and religious customs. He was so learned that he had the knowledge of a magic spell. The power of the magic spell would mean that one could control all the people and animals as they liked. But, for this, some rites and penance were needed to be performed alone. Then the spell would be recited and learnt by heart. Only then it could be brought in use. To empower himself with the magic spell, the priest went to a forest. There he sat under a tree and performed the necessary rites. Then he recited the magic spell twenty-one times and learnt it by heart. Then he

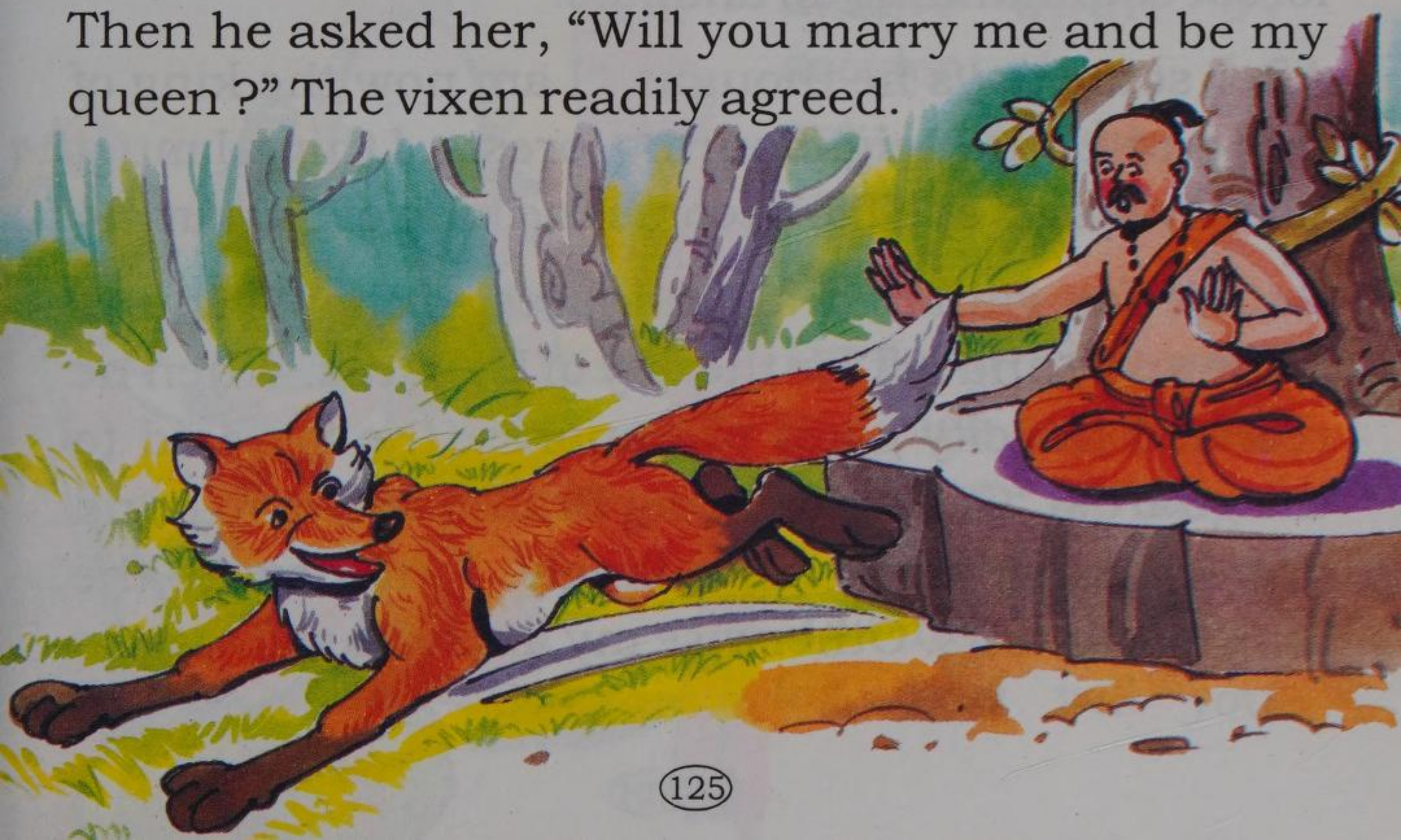
said aloud, "Now I have the power of this magic spell. I will use it to help people who are in distress. I will control people and animals easily."

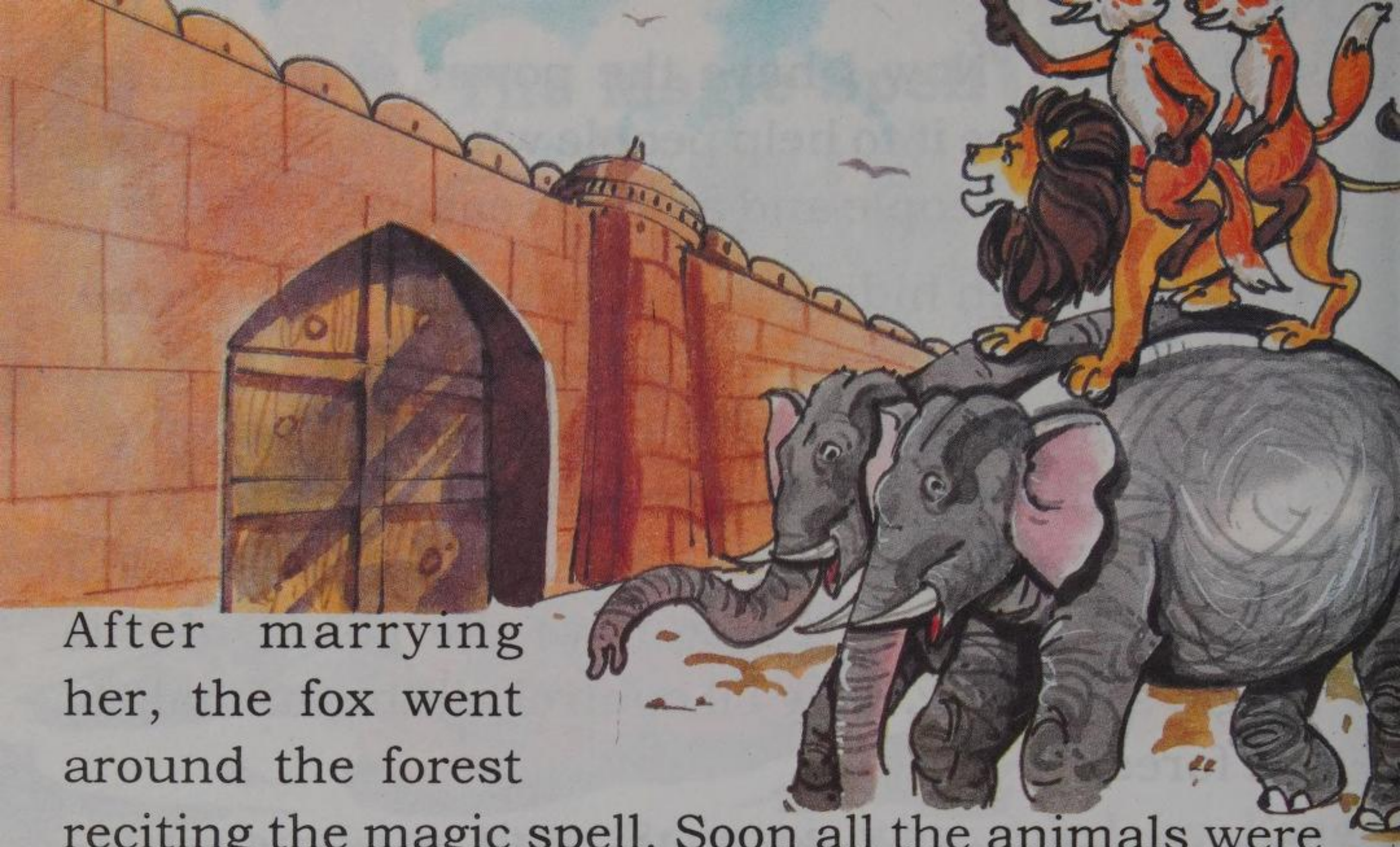
A fox had been hiding behind a bush near the tree. He had been there all the time. So in a way he had taken part in the rites. He had heard the magic spell twenty-one times when the priest had recited it. The fox came from behind the bush and laughed. He said, "I also have the power of this magic spell now. Now I'll control all the animals of the forest."

The priest was startled. He said. "Hey, don't do that. You will use it for wrong reasons for I know you are a wicked fox."

"No one can stop me now," said the wicked fox and ran away.

A little while later the fox saw a vixen. He went to her, looked in her eyes and recited the magic spell. Then he asked her, "Will you marry me and be my queen ?" The vixen readily agreed.





After marrying her, the fox went around the forest reciting the magic spell. Soon all the animals were in his control. Then he announced, "I am the king of the forest. You must all obey me."

He directed two elephants to walk along together. Then he made a lion stand on their back and the fox and the vixen rode on the lion's back. In such a grand and unique way, the fox used to roam the forest commanding all animals.

After some days he thought, "I am now the king of this and all the neighbouring forests. I think I must use my magic spell to become the king of Banaras."

So the fox gathered all the forest animals into a huge army and left for the city of Banaras. When he reached the city gates of Banaras, the fox said to the guards, "Go and tell King Brahmadatta to hand over his kingdom to me willingly. I will now be the king of Banaras. Otherwise my animals will wage a

war against him. Tell him that I know the magic spell to control anyone who comes my way."

When King Brahmadatta heard this message, he got worried. He said to his courtiers, "What should we do now ? My brave soldiers are courageous and trained to fight a human army. But an animals' army is no match for them. My people will be killed and eaten by those animals. The wicked fox is threatening about using the magic spell."

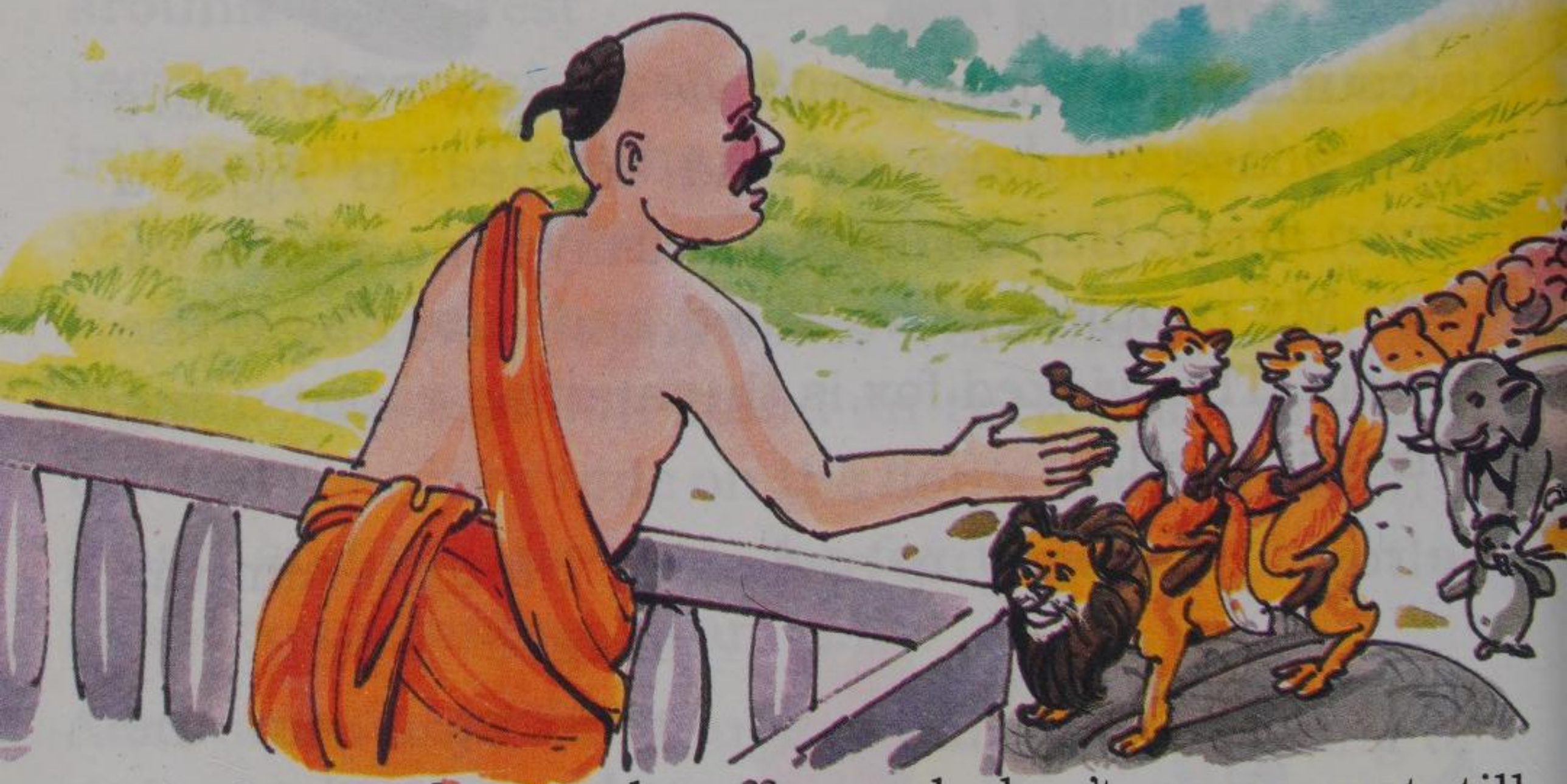
The royal priest got up and said, "I taught him the magic spell by accident. I am the only one who can save all of our people."

The royal priest went to a high tower near the city gates of Banaras and said, "Tell me, O mighty fox, how will you

gain King Brahmadatta's kingdom ?"

The proud fox said, "I'll ask all the animals to cry out as loud as they can. The sound of wild animals will frighten the people and your soldiers. When they run around in confusion, my army will reach the palace and capture the king and get the throne for me."

The royal priest went back to the palace. There he made an announcement to all the people, "All of you must stuff your ears with dough so that you cannot hear any sound. Then close all the doors and



windows of your homes and don't come out till instructed."

The people obeyed the royal priest's words. Then he went back again to the tower and said, "O mighty fox, you say, the animals are under your control. Can you make the lions roar with all their might ?"

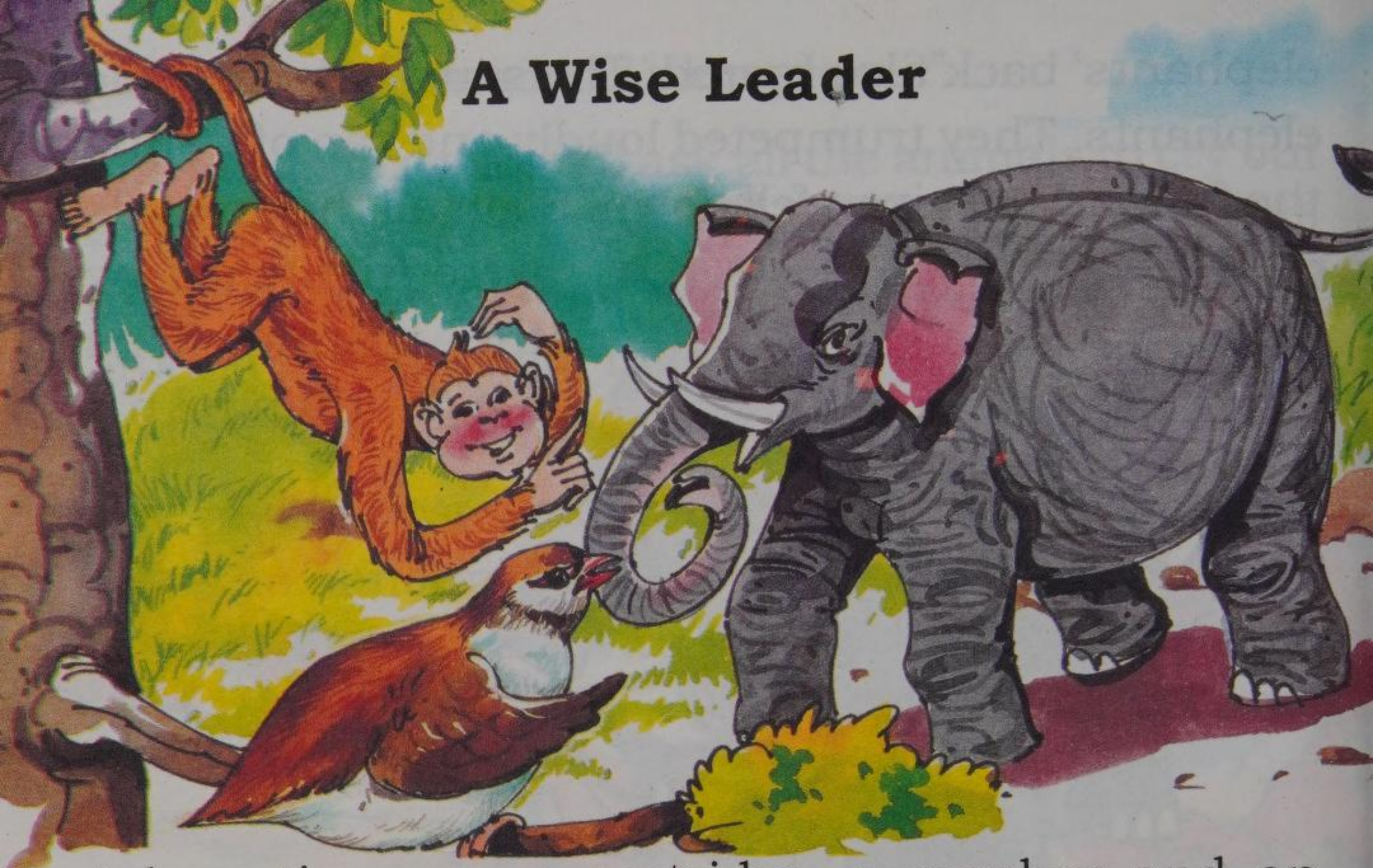
"Yes, why not," said the proud fox. At his command all the lions roared very loudly. The lion on the

elephants' back also roared. The sound startled the elephants. They trumpeted loudly and ran off. Thus the fox and the vixen fell down. Soon all the animals were frightened by the roaring lions and running

elephants. The fox and the vixen were trampled under the elephant's feet and died. The other scared animals attacked each other and killed each other. Some of them ran away to the forest.

Soon the royal priest went back to the palace and informed King Brahmadatta about this. Then the messengers went to all the homes and told the people to take off the dough from their ears. The people felt happy that the danger was over. They all rejoiced and praised the royal priest's intelligence.

A Wise Leader



A long time ago a partridge, a monkey and an elephant lived in a forest. The three forest creatures lived around a banyan tree. They were always arguing amongst themselves for silly reasons. They were never at peace and often the fights did get serious.

One day the three of them met. The partridge said, "I am fed up of fighting everyday. If we chose one of us to be a leader then we would always obey him. After that we would not have anything to argue about."

The monkey and the elephant liked the suggestion.

"So now who will become our leader ?" the monkey asked.

The three creatures got thoughtful. Then the elephant said, "I think we must first know the

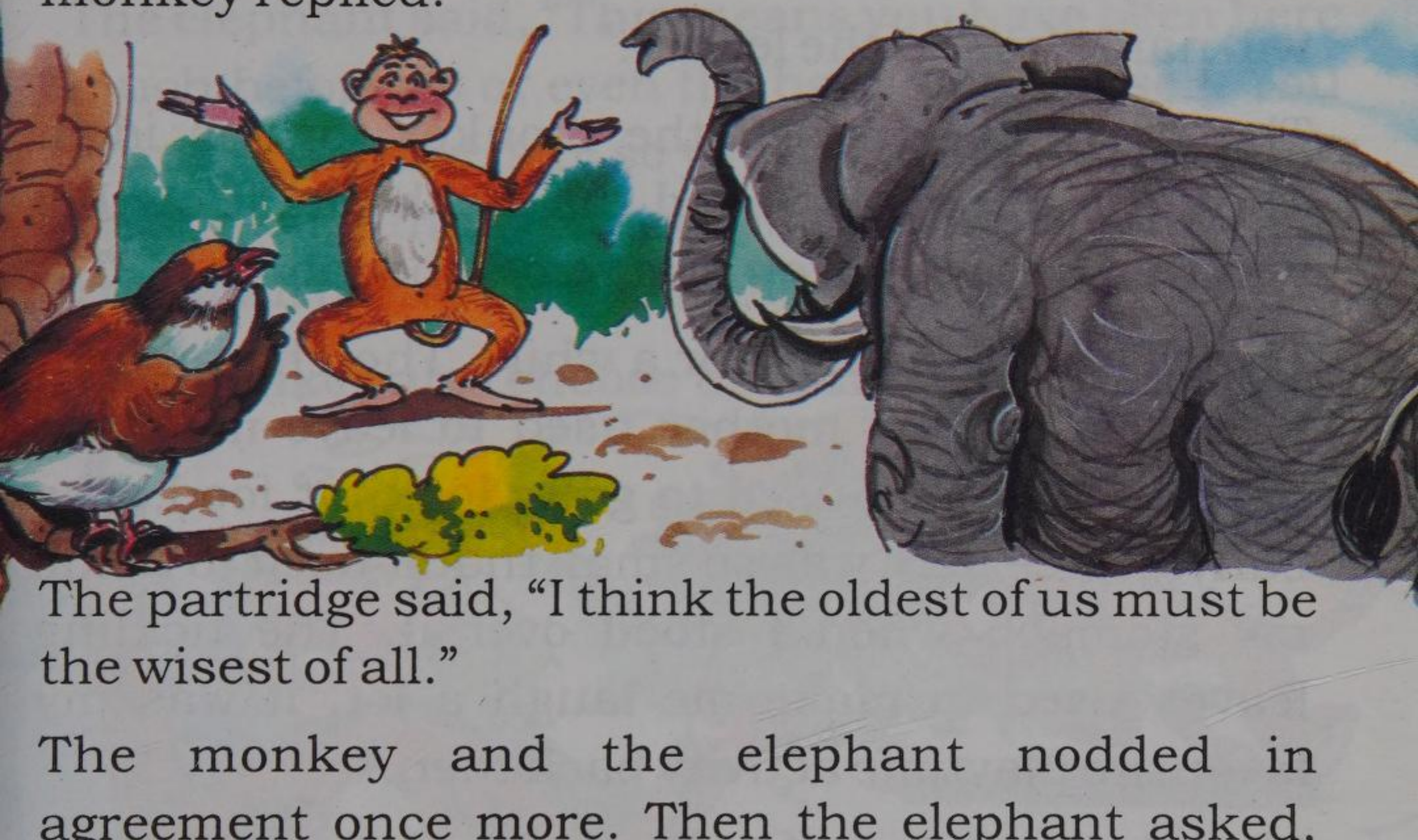
qualities we need in our leader. The one who has those qualities will be chosen as our leader."

The monkey and the partridge nodded in agreement. Then the partridge said, "What quality is the most needed one for a good leader ?"

The monkey said, "I think our leader must be wise to take correct decisions when needed."

"Yes, you are correct," the elephant agreed. "But how will we know that who amongst us is wise ?"

"For this we must have some sort of a test," the monkey replied.



The partridge said, "I think the oldest of us must be the wisest of all."

The monkey and the elephant nodded in agreement once more. Then the elephant asked, "Now we must find a way to find out who is the oldest amongst us."

The three creatures got thoughtful once again. Then the monkey jumped up in delight. He said, "Now I know how to find that out. We have all

grown and lived around this huge banyan tree. We must remember how big this tree was, when we came here to live. The animal who can remember back to the farthest time will be judged to be oldest and wisest of us all. Then we will name him as the leader."

The partridge praised the monkey for his idea. Then the partridge asked the elephant, "How big was this tree when you first remember about it ?"

The elephant thought for a while. Then he replied, "I remember, my mother used to leave me back here to play. She used to go to look for food. The banyan tree here was so small that it used to tickle my stomach when I stood over it. The tickling leaves used to make me laugh a lot. It was my favourite playtime activity back then."

Then the partridge asked the monkey, "Dear monkey, how big was this tree when you were small ?"

The monkey thought hard for a long time. Then he said, "As a baby monkey I used to sit on the ground near the banyan tree's sapling. It was just high enough for me to pluck its leaves as I sat on the

ground. I used to spend hours shaking its branches or playing with the sapling's leaves. Now partridge, you must tell us about how high the banyan tree was, when you came here."

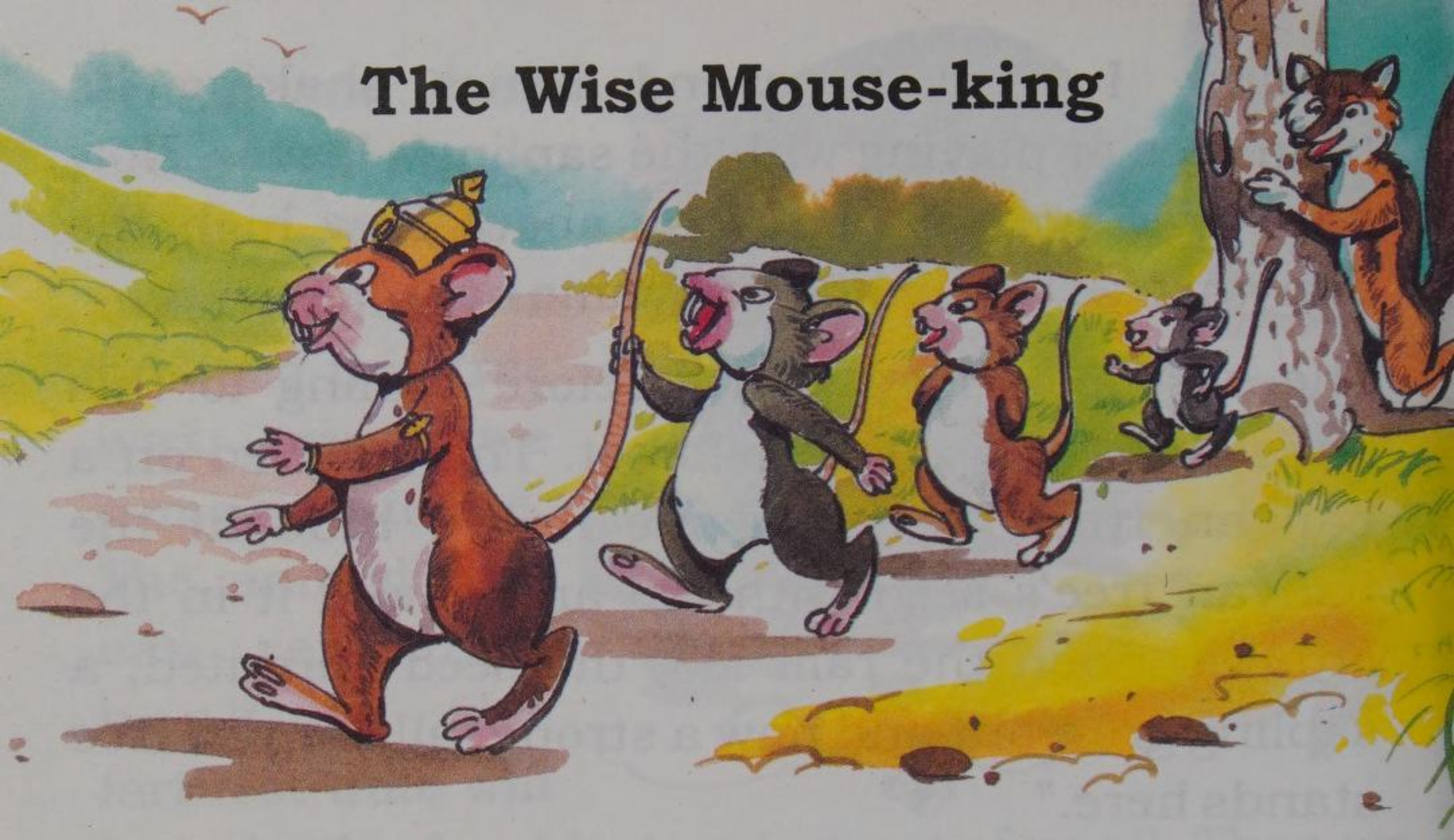
The wise partridge said, "Before coming to this forest I lived in another forest. There I lived on a banyan tree. When I came here I brought the banyan tree's seed with me and sowed it in the ground. Soon the rain fell, the seed sprouted, a sapling grew out and now a strong tall banyan tree stands here."

The elephant said, "This means you have been here much before us or even the banyan tree itself. You brought the tree here so you are the oldest of us all. This means that you are also the wisest of us all. You shall be our chosen leader."

The monkey also choose the partridge as their wise

leader. The partridge agreed to behave wisely, justly and kindly. So the three creatures lived happily ever after.

The Wise Mouse-king



Once a hungry jackal was roaming around a jungle in search of food. As he looked around, he saw the mouse-king near a bush. The jackal thought, "If the mouse-king is here then surely his royal family and followers must be nearby."

So the jackal hid behind a tree and watched. After a while, many of the mouse-king's followers and friends came and all the mice left for some place. The jackal got thoughtful once again, "I can jump and catch a mouse right now but that will fill my stomach only for now. I must act wisely to have food provided for me for a month atleast."

So the jackal stealthily followed the mice to where they lived. They lived in a large mouse hole. The jackal made a plan to catch them. He went near the mouse hole and stood on one leg. His mouth was open wide and his face was towards the sun. After

some time the mouse-king came out of the hole and saw the jackal. He enquired, "Sir, why are you standing on one leg ?"

The jackal replied, "So that the Earth does not need to bear the weight of me on four legs."

"Sir, why is your mouth wide open ?"

"So that I can get in a lot of air. I am feeding on air to survive."

The mouse-king was impressed by the jackal's answers. He asked once again, "Why are you facing the sun?"

"So that I can offer my prayers to the sun all the time."

"Oh ! What a saintly soul !" the mouse-king thought and then went into the mouse hole to retire for the night.

Next morning the jackal took up his position near the mouse-hole. When the mouse-king and his followers came out to look for food, they again saw the jackal standing

on one leg. They all went to the jackal and offered prayers and fruits to the saintly soul. Then they turned to go back. As the mice walked away, the wicked jackal caught the mouse that was lagging behind. None of the mice noticed his wicked act. The jackal gobbled up the mouse and was happy with his lunch. The jackal continued to eat a mouse each for lunch and dinner and this went on for some weeks.

One fine day, the mouse-king looked at the jackal and thought, "This saintly jackal feeds only on air yet I have noticed that he has become plump and stout. Surely it is a miracle that he survives and grows healthier day by day."

That evening the mouse-king's prime minister came to him and said, "Your Majesty, I am worried about a strange fact."

"Yes , tell me about it. Don't be afraid," the mouse-king encouraged.

"Your Majesty, I have noticed lately that the number

of our mice community has decreased. Nearly fifty mice are not to be seen anywhere."

At this comment, the clever mouse-king thought, "Ah ! So that's it. The mice are smaller in number and the jackal is growing plump in health. He must be playing some trick to kill my subjects. I think he catches the mice which lag behind when we visit them. I must check and confirm this fact myself."

That evening when the mouse-king and his followers went to offer prayers to the jackal, the mouse-king walked slowly as they were returning home. Thus, he was a step or two behind his subjects. As usual the jackal pounced to get his mouse for dinner. The mouse-king was alert so he jumped away from the evil jackal's clutches. The mouse-king quickly jumped onto the jackal's neck and bit him hard again and again. The scuffle had attracted the other mice's attention. They came to rescue their king and with the mouse-king they killed the jackal. Thus, the mouse-king and his subjects had a feast as they ate up the dead jackal bit by bit.

The Jackal's Justice

One day a jackal's wife felt very hungry. She called her husband and said, "Dear, I am feeling very hungry today."

The jackal said, "Don't worry, dear. I'll go and get something to eat for you."

But the jackal's wife said, "I will eat only if you get a large fish for me. I have wanted to eat a fish for many days now."

The jackal said, "All right, dear, as you wish. I'll come back with a fish for you. I'll go for it right now."

The jackal went to the river that flowed through the forest. The fish had come to the river in large number to breed. But the jackal thought, "I don't know how to swim. This river's water is swift flowing and freezing, too. How will I catch a big fish ?"

As he sat thinking on the river bank, he saw two otters in the river. They were trying to catch a big fish. After a few minutes, they caught a big fish. One otter held the fish by its head and the other held the fish by its tail. Both of them brought the large fish to the bank. Then they started arguing. One of the otters said, "Now we must divide this fish for we have caught it. But I tried harder and held the fish by its head. So I must get the head portion and a larger share of the fish body."

The other otter insisted, "No, that's not fair. I struggled more to catch and pull this big fish to the bank. So I must get the larger share."

The jackal watched all this from a distance. He thought, "Ah ! Here's a chance for me to get the fish for my wife. I hope the otters will ask me to intervene to solve their problem."

So the jackal approached the otters and was about to pass by them, then one of the otters

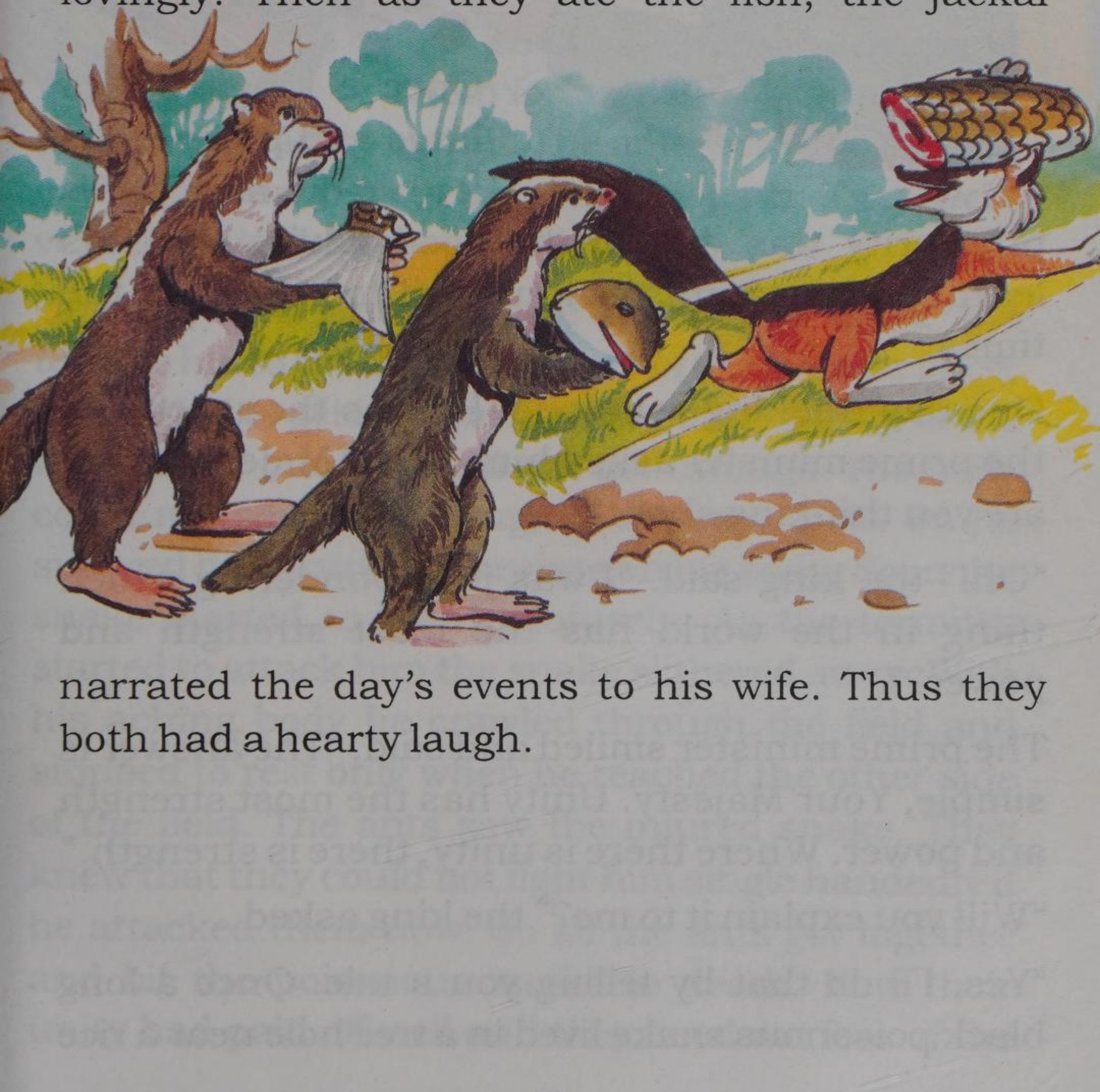
called him, "Sir, can you help us, please ?" The jackal's heart filled with glee at the otter's call. He said, "Yes, how can I help you ?" The otter said, "Me and my friend caught this fish. I pulled it by the head and he pulled it by the tail. Now we cannot decide who should get the larger share."

"Is that all ? Just give the fish to me," the jackal said. Then he put the fish on the ground. He cut off the head of the fish by a knife and gave it to one of the otters. He said, "You caught the fish by its head so you'll have the head."

Then he cut off the fish's tail and while giving it to the other otter he said, "Here's the tail for you who caught the fish by its tail."

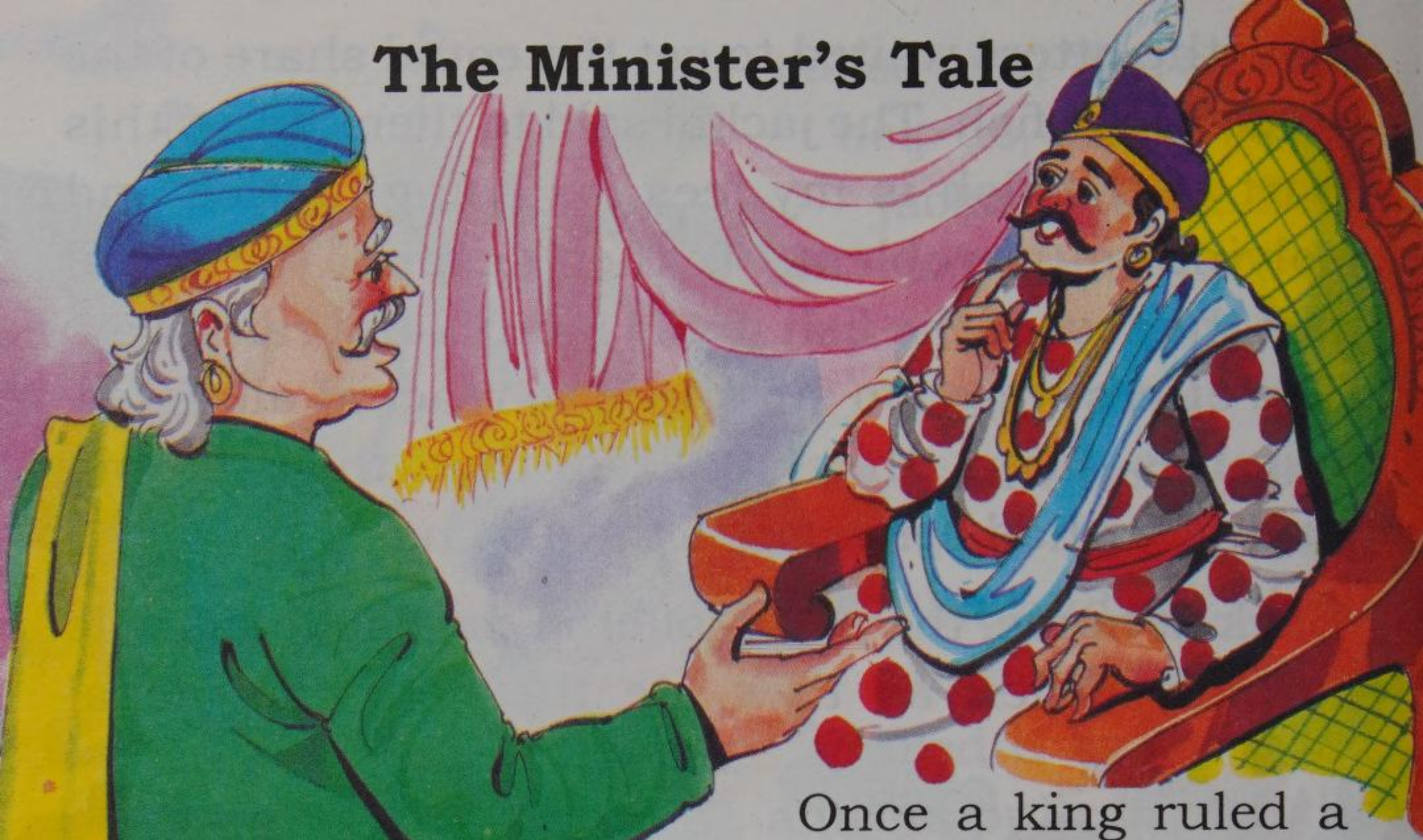
Now the otters waited to get the equal share of the torso of the fish. The jackal said to them, "And this part of the fish is my fees for doing justice and solving your problem." To their surprise the jackal put the rest of the fish in his mouth and ran away. The otters were too surprised to react at all. A few minutes later, they realized that their stupid argument had benefitted a third being.

Back at home, the jackal offered the fish to his wife lovingly. Then as they ate the fish, the jackal



narrated the day's events to his wife. Thus they both had a hearty laugh.

The Minister's Tale



Once a king ruled a large and prosperous kingdom. His prosperity was due to the good advice that his learned prime minister imparted to him at all the times.

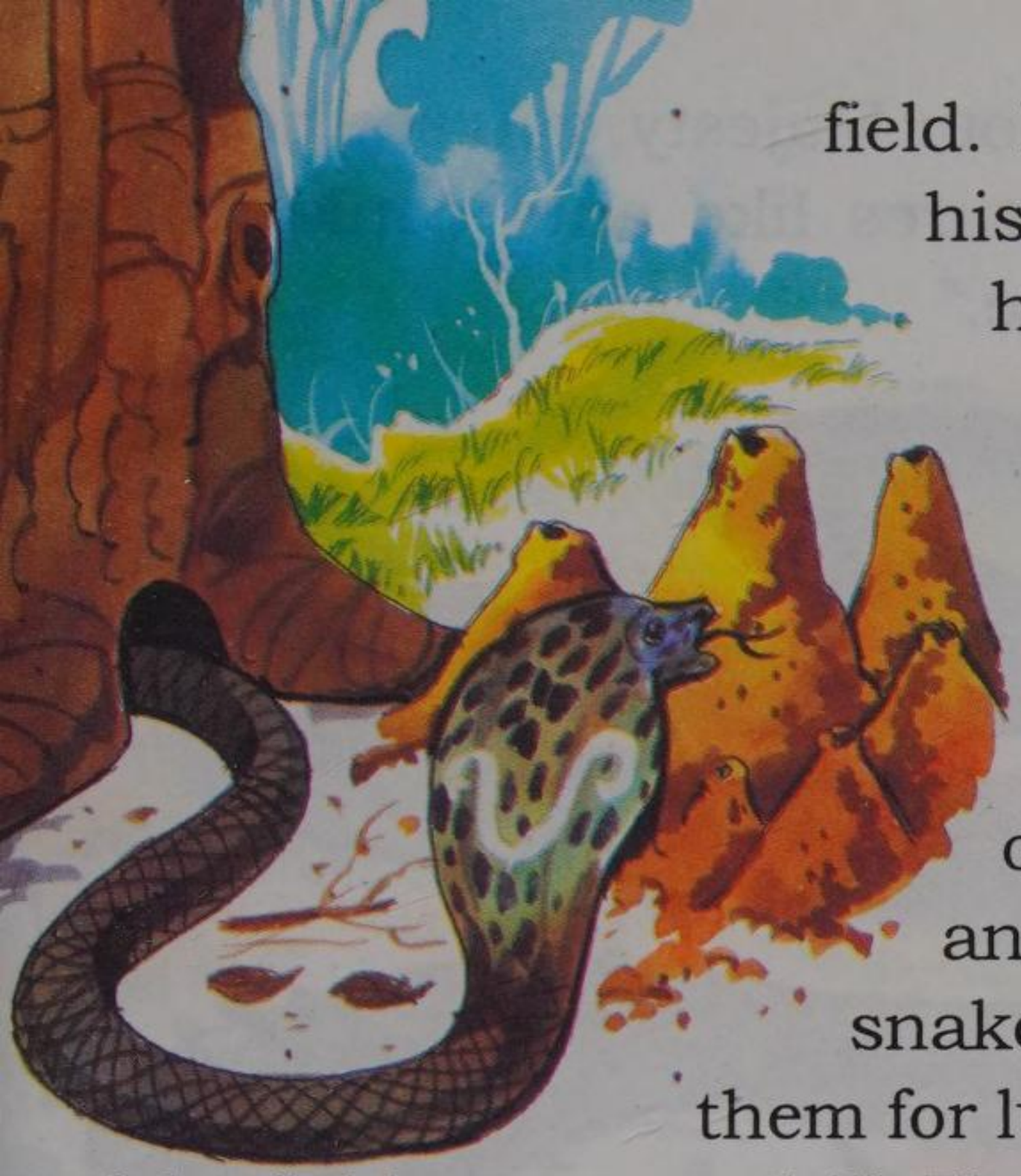
One day the king sat alone. He was thoughtful so the prime minister asked him, "Your Majesty, what are you thinking about?"

"Oh!" the king said. "I was just wondering which thing in the world has the most strength and power?"

The prime minister smiled and said, "The answer is simple, Your Majesty. Unity has the most strength and power. Where there is unity, there is strength."

"Will you explain it to me?" the king asked.

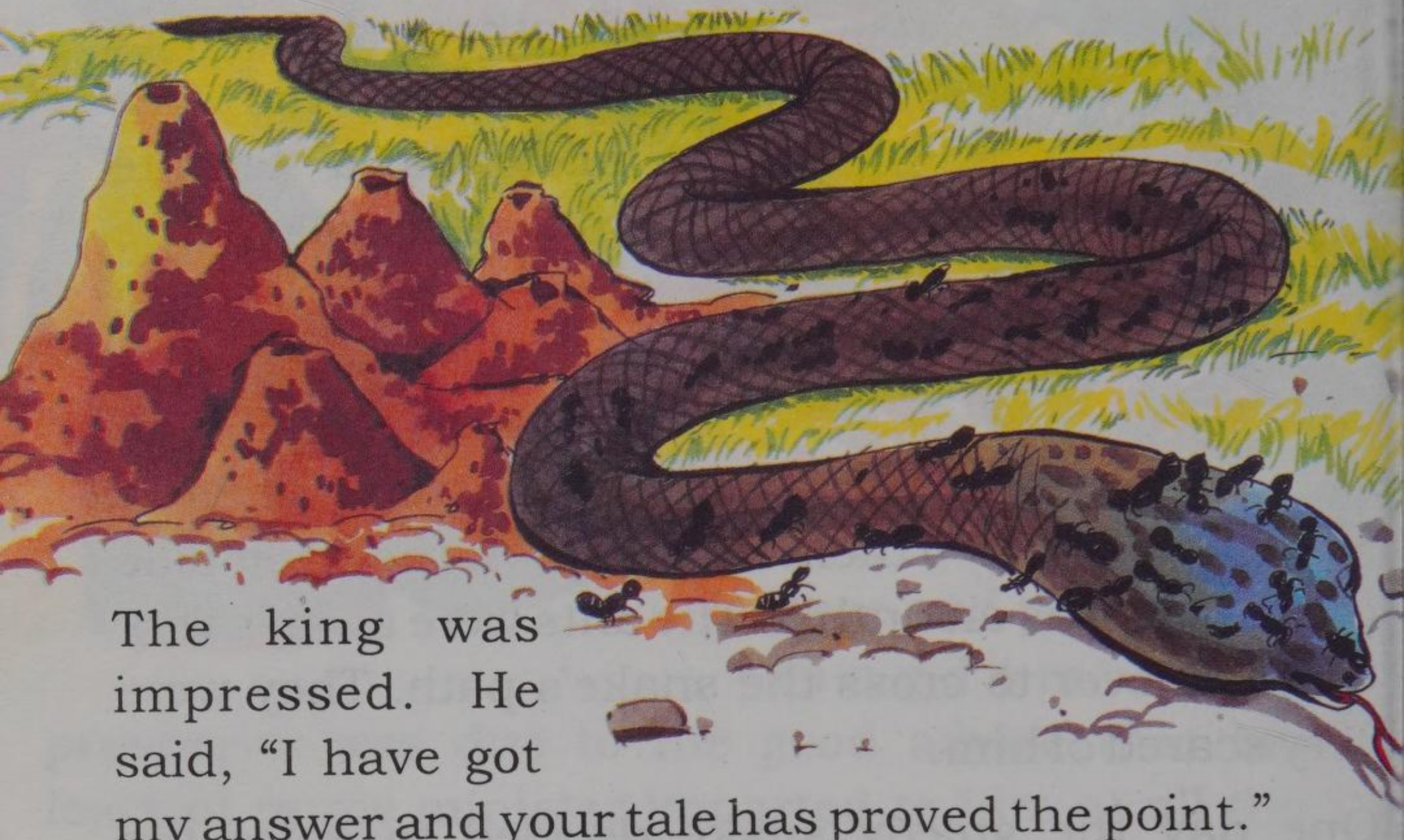
"Yes, I'll do that by telling you a tale. Once a long black poisonous snake lived in a tree hole near a rice



field. He was very proud of his strength and was happy to bite, scare and kill others. A few feet away from his tree hole was a termite hill. Everyday the termites used to come out of their home to go and look for food. The snake used to eat some of them for lunch. At the other side of the field was an anthill. The ants were always very careful never to cross the snake's path. They were very scared of him.

One day the greedy snake decided to enter the termite hill to eat a large number of termites for once. So he tried to get into the narrow hole at the tip of the termite hill but he could not get through. His body could not squeeze through the narrow hole. So he suffered deep cuts and bruises on his body. Soon the snake started to bleed profusely. As the termites started to attack him the snake slithered away. With his aching body he crawled through the field and stopped to rest only when he reached the other side of the field. The ants saw the injured snake. They knew that they could not fight him single handedly if he attacked them now. So all the ants got together and bit the poisonous snake to death. Now their unity had paid off well and they need not fear of the

snake's attack. Thus, Your Majesty, you see how the unity of the tiny creatures like ants could kill a mighty poisonous snake."



The king was impressed. He said, "I have got my answer and your tale has proved the point."

The prime minister said, "Your Majesty, unity is strength and power. The country whose people do not stay united, who are fighting feuds amongst themselves never prosper. The country whose people are not happy or peaceful do not keep their king happy either. The king of such a country is always worried and tense. On the other hand a king must also have the quality to keep his people united. A good ruler is one who takes care of all the needs of his people. He must keep his people united like the beads of a necklace."

Thus once more the king was benefitted by his wise prime minister's words.

TINY TOT

Best of

JATAKA TALES

TINY TOT

Best of

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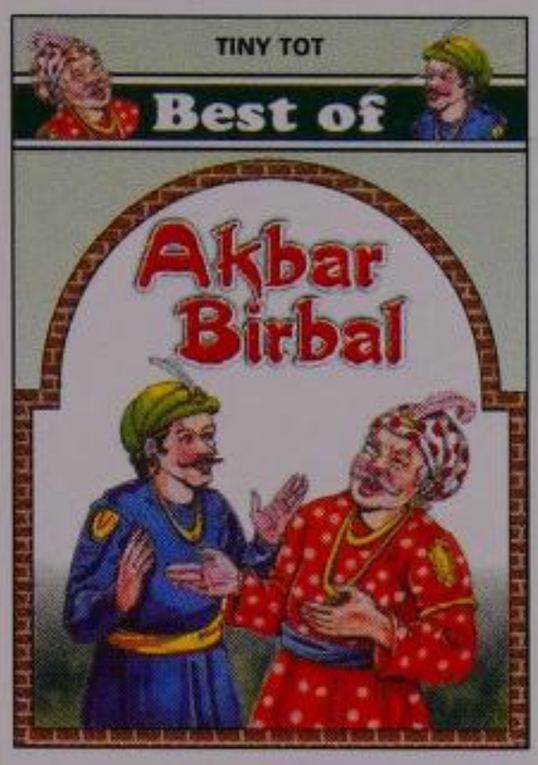
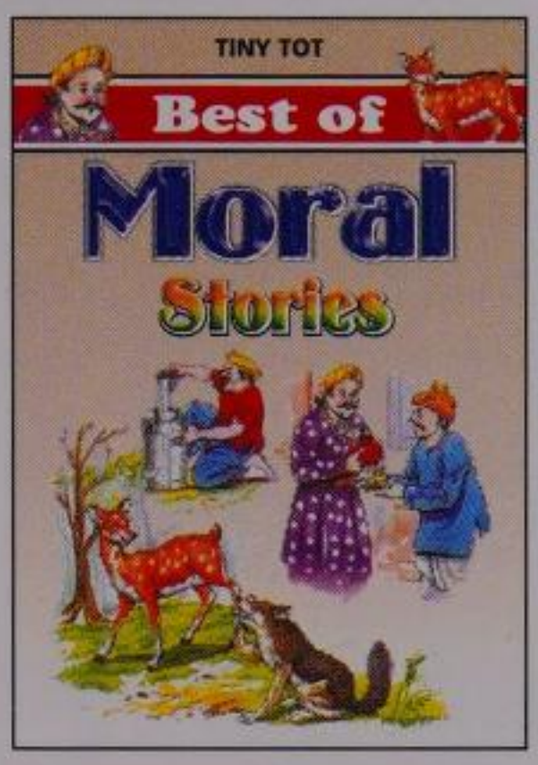
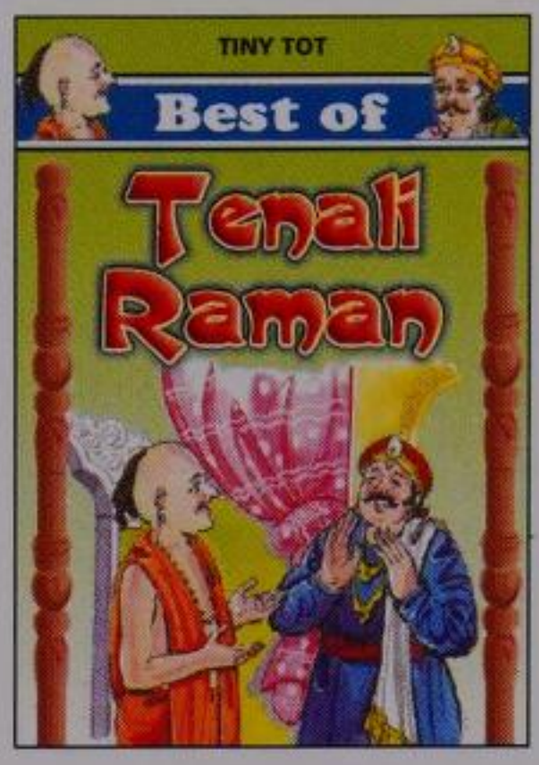
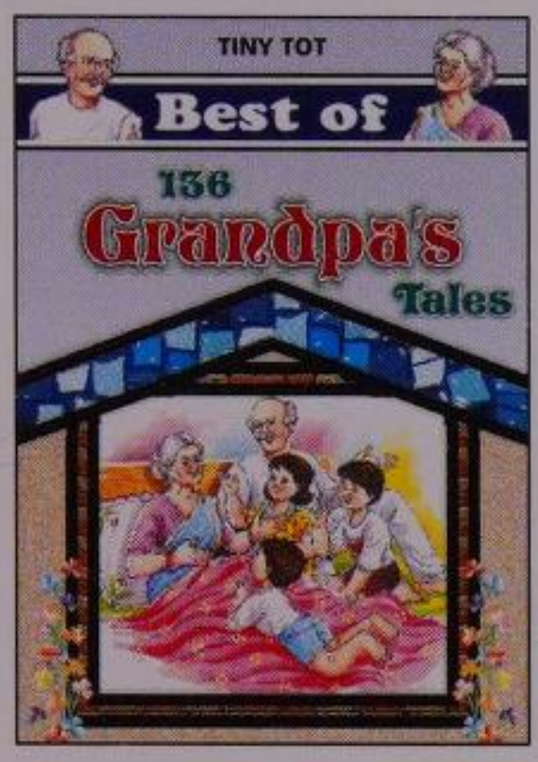
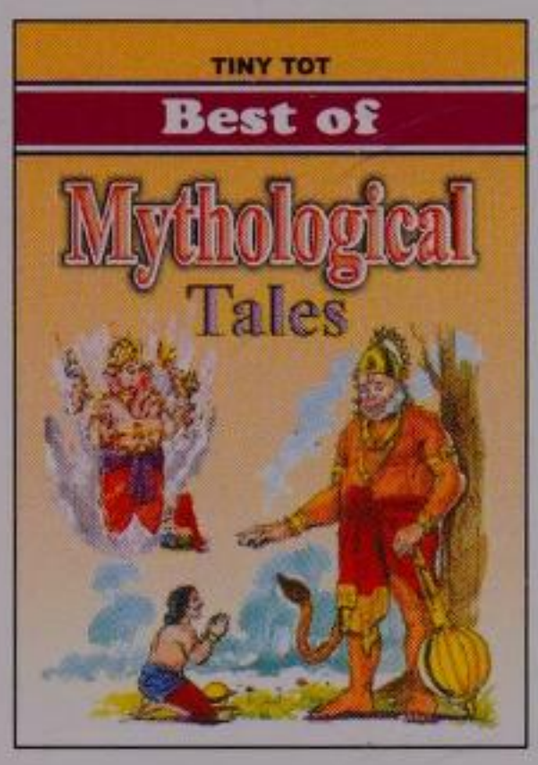
Books in This Series

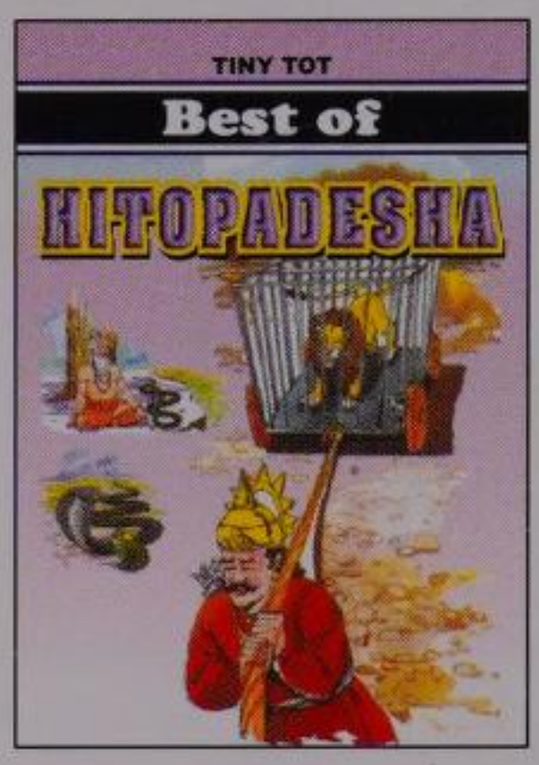


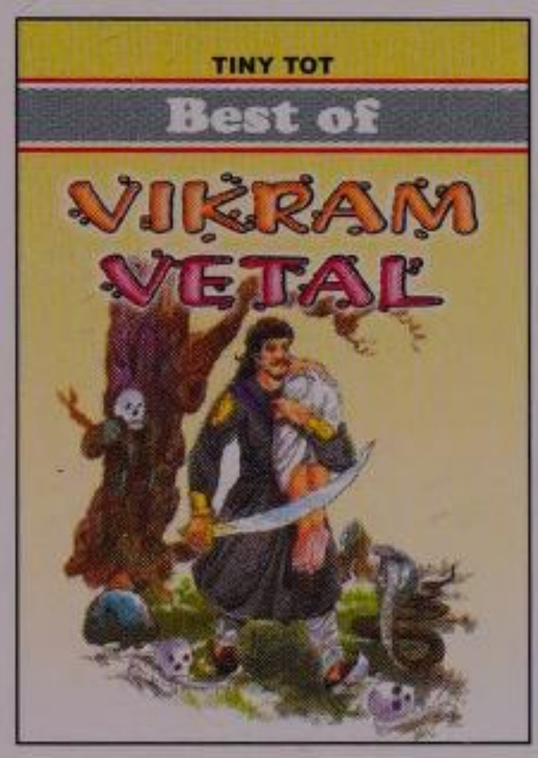


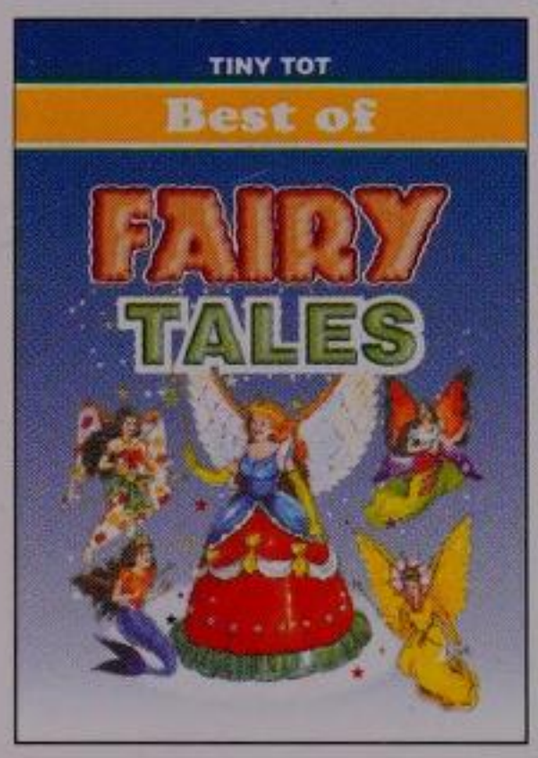


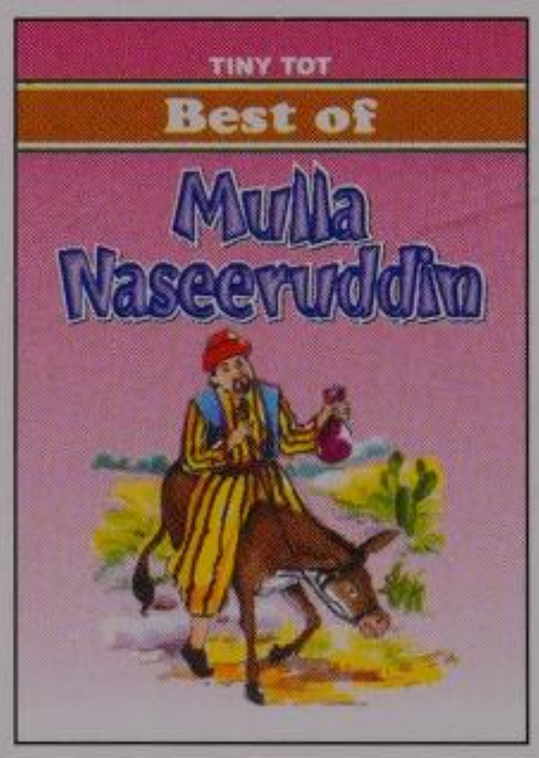


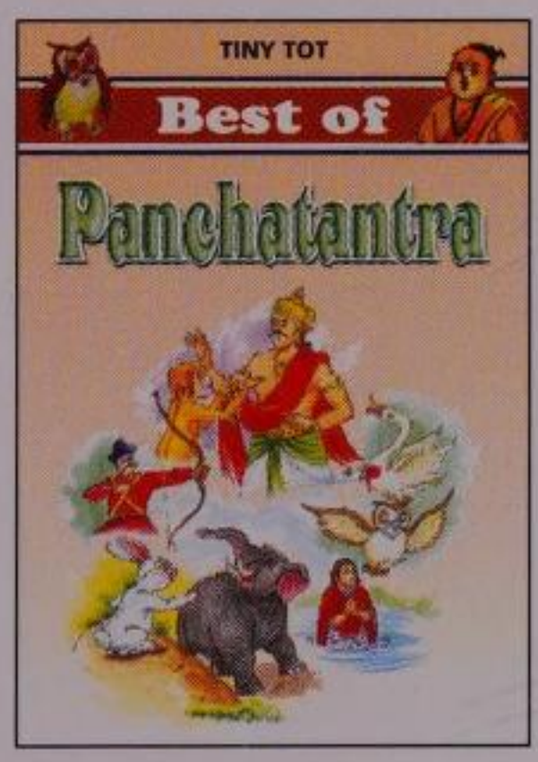


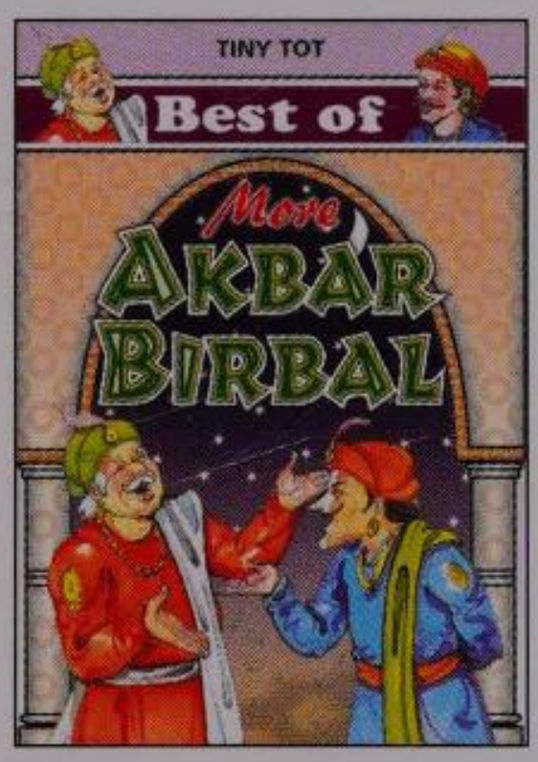


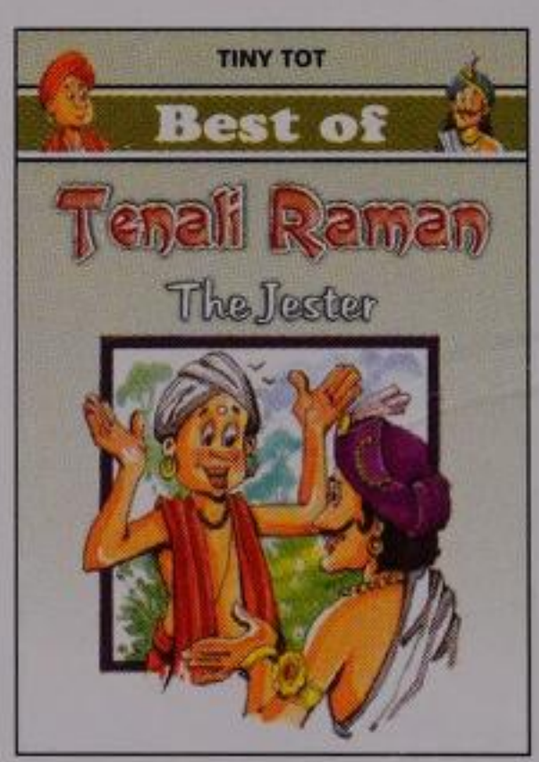


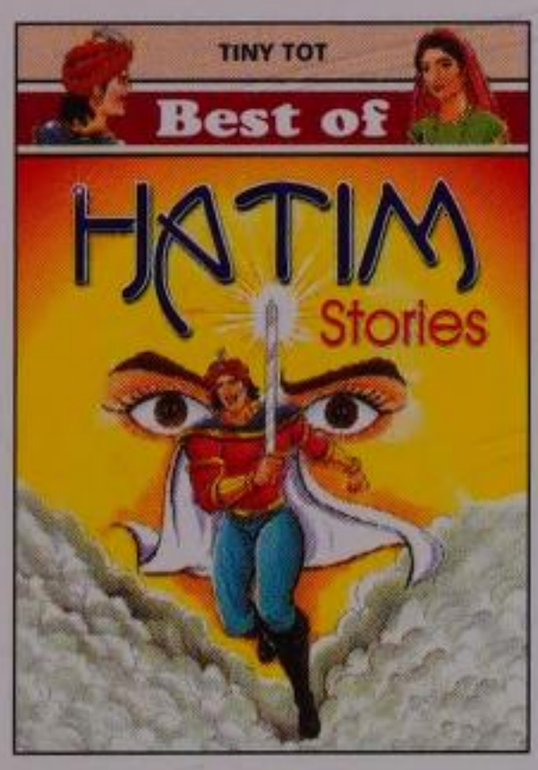


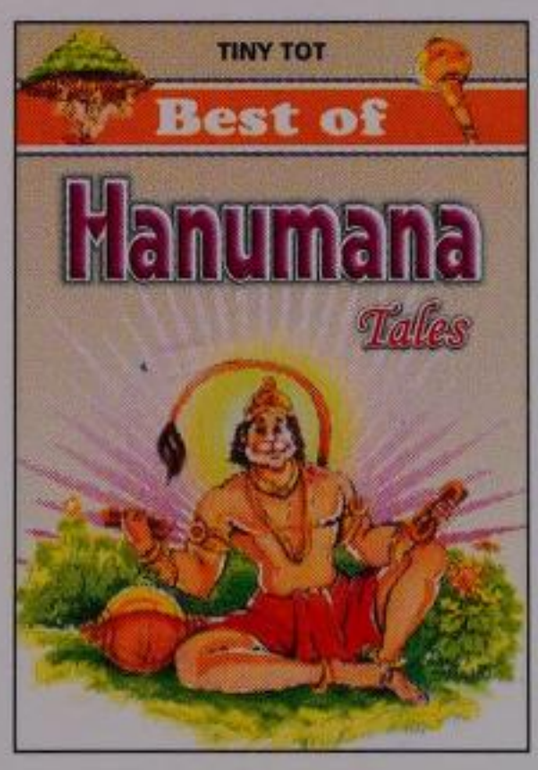


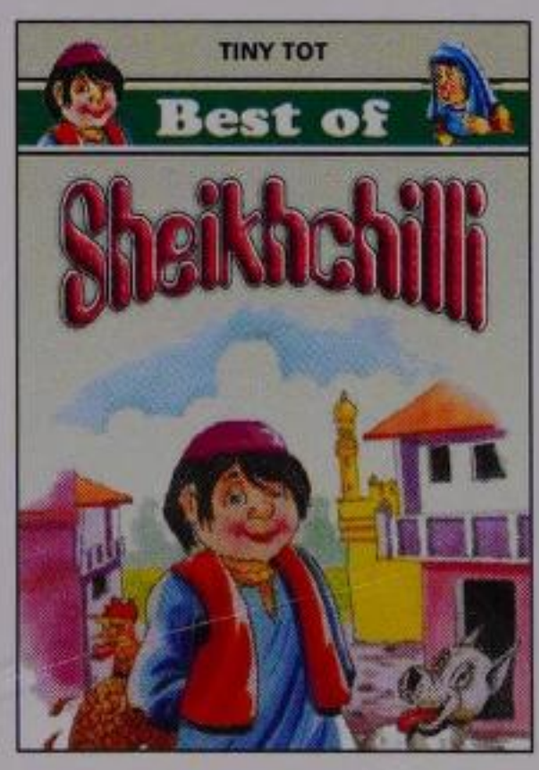












Gautama Buddha was a contemporary of Lord Mahavira. He founded the religion called Buddhism. The birth, childhood life of Gautama Buddha is not known in details, his followers believed that he had lived many lives before, he became the Buddha and founded the Buddhism. According to the Buddhism, all living creatures die to be born again. The 'Jataka Tales' were written to describe the various lives of Buddha. In these stories, he has been given an animal form such as monkey, deer, elephant, lion etc.

The Jataka Tales became very popular as they helped people to learn the teachings of Lord Buddha. These stories spread the message of justice and wisdom. The Jataka tales help a child to attain the wisdom of right thinking and right living. In this edition, an attempt has been made to present the stories in a way so that they will interest as well as educate the young children.

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